AN ESSAY

CONTRIBUTING TO

A PHILOSOPHY OF LITERATURE.

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BY

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Vagliami il lungo studio e'l grande amore.

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PREFACE.

IT is the aim of the present Essay to embody in a united whole the laws and principles of literature in its most general relations. It may be considered as an introduction to the Philosophy of History.

In its present shape, it is only a fragment of a complete whole. The second part — *The Criterion* — will have for object to determine the underlying principles in the various departments of literature — in philosophy, poetry, fiction, oratory, history, and journalism, and upon whatever is fixed and constant in these and the other branches that are exponents of thought, to build a standard of criticism.

The author is too succinct throughout to exhaust any subject. He can only suggest. To preserve the unity of his subject, he has been frequently compelled to abandon a line of argument when it was beginning to be interesting. He deals with such live questions as *Positivism*, *Evolutionism*, and *Hegelism*, only in as far as they agree or disagree with that condition of things that is most favorable to the production of a

perfect literature. He has therefore left much unsaid that the philosophic reader will expect him to touch upon.

The Essay is intended for young men of advanced classes. The consideration that for them the author was working, made the writing of it a labor of love. To them he dedicates it.

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INTRODUCTION.

PHILOSOPHY is the science of principles in their relations with things. It determines, weighs, examines, the validity of the fundamental principles upon which knowledge is based.

2. Every clearly-defined part of knowledge has elementary notions upon which it is based, and without which it cannot exist. They are its first principles. The philosophy of the subject deals with them. It has the first word, because its province is to determine what principles are primary for that subject, and in what sense they are to be taken. It lays the foundation before building the superstructure. It has also the last word; for it must see that no material enters into the construction that the fundamental principles cannot support. Thus every department of knowledge has its philosophy.

3. The Philosophy of Literature has for object to investigate the general relations of literature, as the expression of humanity, to the epochs in which society lives and moves, to thought, to language, to industry, art, science, and religion, as each is devel-

oped and expressed; and from these relations to deduce the laws that determine its variations, the fundamental principles upon which it is based, and the elements that constitute it literature.

4. Every science has a method and a principle. The principle determines the method. The method pursued in the Philosophy of Literature is this: Literature is defined in its most general aspects; its origin and functions are determined; then its general relations are dwelt upon; after which it is considered as influenced and as an influencing agency; and the spirit of rationalism that began to expand in the fifteenth, and became universal in the sixteenth century, is investigated in its main stem and chief branches, so far as it has affected literature. A theory of the beautiful equally applicable to art and letters is established, and in its light the conservative element of literature is expressed. Some practical hints, based upon the theory and facts laid down, are given; the problem of intelligence is touched upon, and the morality of literature is discussed.

5. Literature is not read for its own sake. The product of thought, it nourishes thought, which in its turn seeks expression and adds to literature. Thus, literature is the educator of thought. But it may also be its ruin; and it actually is so when regarded exclusively as a matter of memory and imitation. This

idea underlies all that is said in the present Essay. It is its determining principle.

6. The following truths are postulated:

I. That there is a God and a divine revelation.

II. That man is made in the image and likeness of his Maker.

III. That his aspirations are satisfied only in the plane of the supernatural.

A

PHILOSOPHY OF LITERATURE.

PART I.

PRINCIPLES AND FACTS.

CHAPTER I.

DEFINITION AND FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE OF LITERATURE.

LITERATURE is the verbal expression of man's affections as acted upon in his relations with the material world, society, and his Creator; that expression being as varied as the moods that pass over his soul, whether they speak of love or hatred, of joy or sorrow, of fear or hope. In a word, the language that addresses itself to the *human* in man is literature. It may be abstract, as in metaphysics; but so long as it deals with questions that touch him as intimately as his origin and his destiny, so long will it possess a charm for all times and all peoples. Matters purely

scientific do not possess this trait. Men enjoyed the light of day as well when the corpuscular theory was in vogue as they do at present, convinced of its absurdity and of the truth of the wave theory. But he who reads the history of society, and studies the trials and triumphs and failures of individuals like himself — who has watched the ways of a *Pendennis* and a *Copperfield,* or followed *Evangeline* in her tried and beautiful life, or imbibed the deeper and more earnest lessons taught by a Job and an Augustine — will learn to look more kindly on his fellow-man; the light in which humanity will appear to him will be all the brighter for his extended acquaintance.

Literature appeals to the sentiments in their widest range, from the sphere of simple delight, such as is afforded by the fable, the nursery tale, or the popular scientific treatise, through all phases of passion, to the intense strain of terror or pity inspired by tragedy. It enlists the reader's attention; it moves him to tears; it excites him to mirth and laughter; and often, while professing only to please, it initiates him into all the secrets of the heart.

Literature has its roots deep in the nature of man. He thinks, feels, and speaks; he has the faculty of remembering and the power of recording; and instinctively he believes his own soul to be the mirror in which he may read other men's. Hence the repartee so frequently used: "He judges others by himself;" and its frequency shows how universally it is considered a criterion. "We are so constituted that each regards himself as the mirror of society; what passes in our own heart seems to us to be infallibly

the history of the whole world."[1] It may therefore be concluded that the fundamental principle of all literature is that a common humanity underlies our individual personalities. What affects one, has power, as a rule, to affect all. For each of us is it true that he is a stranger to nothing human.

"Homo sum; humani nihil a me alienum puto."

CHAPTER II.

THE FUNCTION OF LITERATURE.

MAN, as we now find him, is restless, ill satisfied with himself, seldom content with the sphere in which his duties lie, and always looking above and beyond, dreaming of ideal worlds and ideal situations, in which he loves to forget the smoke and dust, the thorny paths and stony roads, through which he moves in his every-day existence. Literature fosters and partially satisfies this craving of his nature. It bears him into the regions of the sublime, the beautiful, the marvellous; and his soul rejoices in the transfer. Deep in the recesses of his heart there resound vague whisperings, the exact import of which fancy seems incompetent to catch—spectres of

[1] "Nous sommes ainsi faits que chacun de nous se regarde comme le miroir de la société; ce qui se passe dans notre cœur nous paraît infailliblement l'histoire de l'univers." — EMILE SOUVESTRE, *Un Philosophe sous les Toit*, ch. iii.

thought to which imagination has been unable to give shape or hue; weak impulses, whither tending he cannot tell. These it is the function of literature to interpret. It also evokes ideas; for man is so much the creature of education, so totally helpless is he when isolated, that his intelligence cannot be developed until external influences are brought to bear upon it. The clash of thought educes new thought. Mind influences mind, even over the chasm of ages. Virgil bows before Homer, and Dante acknowledges Virgil to be his master and model. For a thousand years Aristotle is the inspiration of the philosophical world. The genius of Thackeray expands only after it has been saturated with the master-pieces of Richardson and Fielding. Thus is wrought the chain of thought that girdles the world.

We cannot perceive in either literature or science that unlimited power which modern partisans conceive the one and the other to wield as reformers of the world and restorers of man's moral excellence. Were he a being of mere intellect, such a course were well. But no; he has a will to guide, passions to restrain, a duty to perform; and neither literature nor science alone can avail him in these higher purposes of life. Knowledge and virtue do not always go hand in hand. The result of this misguided movement has been expressed by the poet of the day:

> "Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and I linger on the shore,
> And the individual withers, and the world is more and more."

Let the people have literature and science; let them have museums and reading-rooms and popular lec-

tures; but let them have more. Let them have religion. It will restrain violence; it will be their solace when beset with difficulties, their support when all else fails them, their happiness here, and their guiding-star through life to the great hereafter that awaits them. It alone has power to reform and perfect man's moral nature. It alone gives nations their first progressive impulse. It is the basis of civilization. It has inspired the sublimest themes in all literature. It has laid down and enforced those moral laws that are the chief characteristic of our superiority. All this is beyond the sphere of literature, the legitimate function of which is to awaken sentiments and draw out parts in our nature almost smothered by the cares and duties of life.

CHAPTER III.

THE ORIGIN OF LITERATURE.

WE will begin with a survey of our position. The equilibrium of man's faculties is broken. In his consciousness, throughout his whole nature, there is disturbance. Was it always so? All the attempted solutions of this question may be reduced to two. One school says: "Look around you, and everywhere you see a struggle for life. The weak gives place to the strong. It is the survival of the fittest.[1] This is true of man as well as of the rest of

[1] Herbert Spencer.

the brute creation; for he is but a link in the chain of the grand whole, differing from the dog or the chimpanzee in degree of intelligence rather than in kind.[1] He is subject to the same impulses — ever ready to make might right — ever on the alert to show his selfishness; for passion is simply a manifestation of self. His animal nature is the primary cause of this disturbance, and as he ascends the scale of perfectibility an equilibrium in his faculties will become more determined. See how much has been already accomplished. There is to-day greater difference between the intelligent Caucasian and the South Sea savage than between the savage and the monkey."[2] According to this view, language and literature are the result of man's progress in intelligence. But facts militate against the theory; for the noblest monuments of literature are the earliest. Witness the Bible, the Vedas, Confucius, and Homer. We are not with this school.

The other — the conservative school — recognizes the fact that as an animal, with animal appetites, man is subject to the laws of animal life; but that as a reasonable, responsible being, endowed with a soul possessed of a sense of right and wrong, he is bound to restrain and often suppress these appetites. It holds that the soul is of immediate origin from the Creator, however may be the process of development by which the body has come to its present shape. "For," it says, "however much races may vary, species never do. They are distinct creations. However much sophistry may confound race with species, nature

[1] Darwin. [2] Mr. Fiske, of Harvard.

never makes the blunder. The law of crossings is inviolable." Its belief in a personal God confirms this view. It sees His preservative act in life, and defines it to be the influx of His creative act. Therefore it sees nothing unreasonable in distinct creations. It does not consider the soul hereditary, though capacities, dispositions, and the like, dependent on organisms, are. This school further recognizes the fact that, in certain stages of its existence, society is progressive; though it perceives no such tendency in the savage state. This it regards rather as the old age of society; and the traditions of nations are with it. They all look back to a golden age from the ideal of which men have degenerated:

> "Aurea prima sata est ætas, quæ, vindice nullo,
> Sponte sua, sine lege, fidem, rectumque colebat."[1]

This embodiment of Roman and Grecian tradition implies a harmony in men's consciousness to which we are entire strangers. The history of the East points to the same result. Speaking of Egypt, Mariette says: "Egyptian civilization manifests itself to us fully developed from the earliest ages, and succeeding ones, however numerous, taught it little more."[2] The same is true of China. Historians have yet to show a progress in her literature and civilization. "At the earliest period at which Chinese history opens upon us," says Fergusson, "we find the

[1] The golden age was first; with one accord
Men lived upright; not punishment, reward,
Nor law avenging prompted them.

[2] *Aperçu de l'Histoire d'Egypte.*

same amount of civilization maintaining itself utterly unprogressively to the present day."[1] And that book which is of more weight with this school than all others — the Bible — confirms this universal tradition, and points to a mysterious fact which is the clue to all the intellectual and moral disturbance in man's consciousness. "Original sin is a mystery," says Balmes, "but it explains the whole world."[2] "Without this faith" — in Christianity, and therefore in original sin, says Schlegel — "the whole history of the world would be nought else than an insoluble enigma; an inextricable labyrinth; an unfinished edifice; and the great tragedy of humanity would remain devoid of all proper result."[3] The fall is therefore to be accepted as explaining the present disturbance in man's soul. Let us study the relations of literature to this primary fact of all history.

Prior to the fall, there was no need of a written literature. All man's powers — his will, his intelligence, and the affections of his soul — were so blended together in a harmonious whole, that, in the simple intuition of nature, his insight would have been frequently as deep as that which to-day is the result of discursive reasoning; and the only approach to literature would have been the endless song of praise ascending from each individual — a varied hymn, as the warblings of the feathered tribe are varied — to the Creator of all the beauty and love-

[1] *History of Architecture*, Vol. I., p. 83.

[2] "El pecado original es un misterio, pero este misterio explica el mundo entero." — *Filosofia Fund.*, Vol. I., p. 532.

[3] *Philosophy of History*, Bohn's Ed., Lect. x., p. 279.

liness of which he were the eloquent admirer. Tradition and history he would have remembered without the use of letters. It is a defective intelligence that calls for such aids. Discussion is more a result of our weakness than of our strength. What we comprehend thoroughly we least question. Genius, in its noblest and purest flights, approaches this condition of intelligence, though in a one-sided way. Its characteristic consists in its possessing deeper insight and a greater power of expression than other minds. In the light it throws upon the subject there is grasped a better comprehension of it than men previously possessed. The subject becomes simplified. Less words are required to explain it. From genius we can form a faint idea of how deeply unfallen man must have seen into the secrets of nature. His was no one-sided view, for all his faculties were in complete harmony.

Even immediately after the fall man possessed intellectual energy to which we are total strangers. We cannot conceive those grand old patriarchs or Rishis bent over a book or inscribing their five or seven hundred years' experience of persons and things; not because their language was not sufficiently developed, or that they might not have been in possession of the art of writing, for men in every stage of society found language adequate to the expression of every idea clear to their minds, and men of their years must have understood the symbolism of nature in its deepest import; but, in truth, they had no need whatever of such artificial means. With passions subdued, and unwarped by any of the conventionalities of modern society, and ever filled with

the thought of their Creator's intimate presence, with whom they spoke in prayer with simplicity and faith, the ever-changing panorama of nature and young society was a book in which these great and good men read lessons laden with significancy. It is refreshing to contemplate those intellects, fresh, calm, untrammelled, teeming with great and important thoughts, which they transmit, not to moth-eaten parchments, but by word of mouth to a posterity capable of preserving every jot or tittle of the precious legacy. Their dignified bearing and profound science sadly contrast with what we are compelled to call the little, hurried, jostling ways, with which so many of the present blindly move along, heedless whither they drift, and caring not, provided they have caught up the prevailing note of the day.

But in these antediluvian or prehistoric times there were two parties: the one, the agricultural and pastoral party, the Sethites of Scripture, of whom we have been speaking; the other, the party that built cities and worked iron and manufactures, and made rapid strides in material civilization, but grew morally corrupt to a fearful extent. They are the Cainites. They were too busily occupied in material pursuits and in seeking personal comforts, to make use of a written language; and their life was too vigorous, their energy too great, to require one. They were a proud and haughty race; they were fierce and passionate, and knew no restraint; they made war on the peaceful Sethites and among themselves. Their deeds of prowess, their victories and their heroic leaders—"the mighty men of old, men of renown"[1]—

[1] Genesis vi. 4.

they recounted in song and story, that breathed deep-dyed vengeance, and extolled their own greatness and self-sufficiency to the heavens. They were sunk deep in egotism. Nature had few charms for them. She was their slave, which they, by their profound science and intimate knowledge of her secrets, worked upon and made subservient to the gratification of their selfish motives. The spirits of the air waited upon them, as the angels of God waited upon Abraham and Lot. The elements they held under control, for they were acquainted with the laws that govern them. In mind and body they were giants.

A change came over the face of nature. Men ceased to be long-lived, and no longer possessed the energy and experience of former days. Languages were multiplied. However the cause may be explained, it is plain to all who have given the matter consideration, that there is sufficient connection between all the languages on the face of the earth to show that they had a common origin, and that their departure from this origin was not the result of a gradual process, but rather that there are clear indications of an abrupt severing.[1] No matter how far back in the history of a language we go, we find it complete in all its essential parts, and the lapse of centuries or the most intimate intercourse with nations may add to its variety of expression, but will not

[1] Herder "confidently asserts that, from the examination of languages, the separation among mankind is shown to have been violent; not indeed that they voluntarily changed their language, but that they were rudely and suddenly (*brusquement*) divided from one another." —CARD. WISEMAN, *Lect. on Science and Revealed Religion*, Lect. II. p. 78.

change its grammar and genius, however barren the language be in grammatical forms or in flexibility and delicacy of expression. There are things, according to W. Von Humboldt, that man "could never have arrived at by the slow and progressive process of experience."[1] For this reason those who consider the Bible a book of myths, as well as those who regard it as of divine origin, are agreed upon the dispersion of men, and the sundering of a common language into several tongues. Then came the dawn of a written literature. The comparative shortness of life, desire of fame, and degeneracy of intellect led men to seek means of transmitting their traditions by sign and symbol. Then the cuneiform and hieroglyphic systems were made use of. And while "the earth was of one tongue and of the same speech,"[2] and the family of Noah still dwelt on the plain of Sennaar, the simpler and more universal alphabetic method was invented; and of that one all the alphabets used are variations suited to the changes produced in the organs of speech by the influence of climate.

[1] Je ne crois pas qu'il faille supposer chez les nations auxquelles on est redevable de ces langues admirables des facultés plus qu' humaines, ou admettre qu'elles n'ont point suivi la marche progressive a laquelle les nations sont assujéties; mais je suis penétré de la conviction qu'il ne faut pas méconnaître cette force vraiment divine que recèlent les facultés humaines, ce genie createur des nations, surtout dans l'état primitif, où toutes les idees, et même les facultés de l'âme, empruntent une force plus vive de la nouveauté des impressions, où l'homme peut pressentir des combinaisons auxquelles il ne ne serait jamais arrivé par la marche lente et progressive de l'expérience.—*Lettre a M. Abel-Remusat, Werke*, Vol. VII., pp. 336–7.

[2] Genesis xi. 1.

Diversity of races and languages caused literature to be multiplied. Different peoples would so enshrine a fact that occurred in the distant past—an idea prevalent in the old homestead prior to the dispersion — in a halo of inventions congenial to their dispositions as shaped by climate and occupation, that the fact, the idea, would assume with each a distinct appearance. Hence the diversity of mythologies based upon the same ideas among the Aryan races. Varied as are these races, divergent as is the bent of genius of each, radically opposed as are their individual characters as separate peoples, it is wonderful to see in what a small compass might be included all that is fundamental in their literatures, and how agreed are Kelt and Teuton, Scandinavian and Hindu, in the myths and sagas that have been floating among each for thousands of years. We ask no better proof for the unity of the family.

CHAPTER IV.

LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE.

CLIMATE, in contributing to stamp the character and genius of a people, also determined several traits in its language.[1] And the language reacted in determining and moulding the thought. Thus, there is as clear a contrast between the soft-flowing language of the Italian and the guttural speech of the German as there is in the natural dispositions of each people, and the using of one or the other tongue begets in the speaker different states of mind and feeling. If the Greek has given in poetry and in sculpture the most perfect forms of beauty — if the idea of the fair and the beautiful is elementary in his thought, assuredly the graceful construction of his language had much to do in developing that happy disposition of mind that knew not how to give even a name of ill omen to a place. In like manner, if the Sanskrit, the language of the Hindu of old, in its transparency carries the mind back to the most elementary forms of thought, to it in a measure may be attributed that vast system of mythology that numbers not less than mil-

[1] "Whenever any dialect, founded on human organization, has been permitted to develop itself without restraint, we clearly trace in it the operation of climate and situation. In every mountain dialect we remark a predilection for the strongly aspirated CH; on the sea-coast the softened SCH and the nasal tone are heard; while, on the contrary, a broad tone and sharp accent indicate a level country and an agricultural population." — F. SCHLEGEL, *Romance Literature*, Part II., p. 232, Bohn's Trans.

lions of gods; for the intelligence that pries into every nook and corner of nature, and has a significant name for all it perceives, and then brings an active imagination to bear on both the word and the thing, is profoundly affected by the mysteries it everywhere meets and has no solution for. Even nothingness becomes for it a thing positive, and is deified as Nirvana. Again, in the comparative inflexibility of the Hebrew language there is imaged the persistency of character peculiar to the race. It is a solemn language, suited to a solemn subject. "In its profound significancy," says Schlegel, "and compressed brevity — in its figurative boldness and prophetical inspiration, far more than in any chronological precedence of antiquity, consists the peculiar character and high prerogative of the Hebrew."[1] No wonder, then, that it has been the instrument of prophecy and of the sacred book that rules our modern civilization.

And here a profound question is suggested. How comes it that Aryan intelligence and Aryan civilization, through one book and one teacher, have bent submissive to Semetic influence, so as to become almost Semetic in thought and action? In cast of mind there is little common to the two races. The Aryan has great flexibility of thought, and can easily adapt himself to any conviction. He is speculative and theorizing. His language is plastic, suited both to the highest poetry and scientific precision. The Semetic languages have no aptitude for science and speculation. They are admirably adapted to prophecy and the poetry of feeling. In proof, the Semetic mind has

[1] *Philosophy of Language*, Lect. iii., p. 405, Bohn's Ed.

originated no science. It gave Aristotle to Europe, but it got him from the Greeks, or perhaps found him in the cell of some unknown hermit. In algebra, we owe it nothing but the name, and to call its numbers Arabic is a misnomer; for both it first learned from the Hindu. And still we are under the domination of that mind through its sacred Book. There was nothing in the doctrine of that Book attractive to the Aryan. It destroyed his glowing system of mythology. It imposed upon him mysteries of a most fabulous character, but shorn of all the halo of fable, and he was bound to hush his reason and say, "I believe." It revolutionized art. He loved the nude and the sensuous, and it symbolized the three persons of the Godhead as an old man, a fish, and a dove. He loved to contemplate nature until it grew into his being and became part of his thinking, and the one pulse animated both; and the strange Semetic influence taught him to be more spiritual, to look to the Invisible One, to study his every thought and word and deed with all the severity of an impartial judge, and in the light of laws beyond his imaginings. There is nothing in the nature of things to justify this revolution. But the work was beyond the power of natural influence. It was not a man and a book that did it. It was God; it was his Holy Spirit that breathed upon the nations and renewed the face of the earth. It was His all-convincing mind that raised up the Aryan and the Semetic races so far as they would, and spiritualized the thoughts of the one, and gave him religious convictions beyond the grasp of his theorizing mind, and

broadened the intellectual grasp of the other; thus bettering the natures of both.[1]

Considering language psychologically, we find it to be the symbol of thought, necessary to guide and direct it through the different stages of a reasoning process. It must not be confounded with thought. Each is distinct; and the symbol is always less than the thing symbolized. Hence the utter impossibility of putting in words the whole process of thought by which an idea comes home to the mind. Genius, in its brightest moments, may approach a rounded expression of an idea in all its relations, but it is beyond the power of inferior intellects to do so. There are under-currents of thought that seem to be independent of all language. No intellect, no matter how powerful its grasp, can give an account to itself and put in intelligible language all the reasons and motives and hidden sympathies that go to make up a conviction. "Thought is too keen and manifold; its sources are too remote and hidden; its path too personal, delicate, and circuitous; its subject-matter too various and intricate, to admit of the trammels of any language,

[1] It may be said that the Koran wielded an equally wide influence on the Turanian and some of the Aryan races, and thence inferred that the change here spoken of is due to persistency of character. To this we reply that, while Christianity raised up human nature, Mahometanism degraded it. The course of the latter is exactly the opposite of that of the former. One opposed men's most cherished notions; the other adapted its spirit to the most deeply-rooted customs and superstitions of the Asiatic mind. The penetrating genius of Mahomet was alive to the weaknesses of his countrymen's natures, and made use of them to further his designs. Had he not succeeded, the great problem would be to account for his want of success.

of whatever subtlety and of whatever compass."[1] It is beyond the conditions of space and time in its activity.

There are fixed relations in which language stands to literature. When a people is in a transition state; when old forms and old landmarks are breaking up, and a new order of things is ushered in with time; when the horizon of men's experience is widened, and hitherto unknown wants are felt, then speech seems a confused mass; it is neither old nor new; its elements shift their long-standing, stereotyped positions, and it seems to have outgrown its grammatical laws. A man — a genius — appears at these "plastic moments," to use a happy expression of Schlegel's, and balances himself in the chaos of language, and culls, arranges, and moulds with an indelible stamp for all future time the elements at his command, and points out the direction in which they must germinate and develop while they are a thing of life. Such a man was Shakspeare, in the Elizabethan era of our literature. He moulded all the elements of the language for the first time into a consistent whole. Chaucer's English is Norman; Spenser's is Saxon; Milton's is Latin; but Shakspeare's is neither — it is English. Such is the relation that Dante holds to Italian literature. "Dante again stood between the remnants of the old Roman civilization and the construction of a new and Christian system of arts and letters. He, too, consolidated the floating fragments of an indefinite language, and with them built and thence himself fitted and adorned that stately vessel which bears

[1] J. H. Newman, *Grammar of Assent*, p. 273.

him through all the regions of life and death, of glory, of trial, and of perdition."[1] The author of the poem of the Cid did a like service for Spanish literature, by giving it that decisively Castilian cast that separates it forever from the Latin. Such, also, is the nature of the influence of the author of the Nibelungen-lied — very probably Henry von Ofterdingen — on the German language. Finally, such was the chief trait of Homer's greatness. He gathered up the traditions of the heroic age as they were passing from men's minds, and crystallized them forever in the inimitable language in which we read them to-day; and to him, more than to any other individual, is Greece indebted for that graceful expression that is the glory of her literature.

All these geniuses were masters and legislators of language — not so much because they coined words and invented phrases, as on account of the weight of their names, due to their artistic skill and great natural ability. Their views were profound, and they expressed them better than their contemporaries. Children of their age, they had words of wisdom for it and for all succeeding time. Their works were revered, and they were considered the glory of their nation. And as language is symbolic of thought, and thought of the person, so literature symbolizes the spirit of a nation.

[1] *William Shakspeare*, by H. E. Card. Wiseman, 1865, p. 21.

CHAPTER V.

ARCHITECTURE AND LITERATURE.

ARCHITECTURE is also symbolic of an epoch. Its relations with literature are of a most intimate character, and it will often be found a correct guide in determining the spirit of an age or people. The variety and conflict of opinion in a representative author may render it difficult to catch the prevailing tone of the society in which he moves, whereas the expression of a building is one, and therefore unmistakable. The same national genius inspires both the literature and the architecture, and, in consequence, both express the same spirit. Hegel says: "Nations have deposited the most holy, rich, and intense of their ideas in works of art, and art is the key to the philosophy and religion of a people."

Of the early architecture of the Hindoos we cannot speak. "Their remains," says Fergusson, "are to be found in the Vedas and the Laws of Menu, and in the influence of their superior intellectual power on the lower races; but they excavated no caves, and they reared no monuments of stone or brick that were calculated to endure after having served their original and ephemeral purpose."[1] The same is true of the whole Aryan family in the first stages of its existence. "The Aryans wrote books, but they built no buildings."[2] Their gods were the elements of

[1] *History of Architecture*, Vol. II. [2] Ibid., p. 449.

nature; their temples, the woods, which were so many chapels in the vast cathedral of earth, capped by the immense dome of heaven, beyond which was seated their supreme deity. From the Turanian race they learned how to build, but with such modifications as the peculiar bent of their genius suggested. Thus, that grand monolith at Ellora, the Kailasa temple — rich, airy, massive — is characteristic of the same genius that inspired the Ramayana, some of the myths of which it has representations.[1] By no other people could it have been constructed. It indicates the same luxuriant imagination that breathes in their various philosophical systems. The ancient Indians were so absorbed in thought that all things else were secondary. "The Hindus were a nation of philosophers. Their struggles were the struggles of thought; their past, the problem of creation; their future, the problem of existence."[2] The doctrine of metempsychosis shaped their whole life. With that ever present to their minds, they worked and acted and lived that their future existence might be superior to their present one. The future alone was real for them. The present was *maya* — mere illusion.

With Egypt is it particularly true that her architecture reveals her spirit, for it is the only document she has left us; and in it we read her history, her manners, her customs, her advancement in letters, science, and civilization. Her monuments are her books. In them she wished to perpetuate herself. "People truly singular and unique in history," ex-

[1] See Fergusson's *Handbook of Architecture.*

[2] Max Müller, *Sanscrit Literature.*

claims Rossellini, "who have employed every means to perpetuate themselves whole and entire down to the latest posterity!"[1] Now, through the whole course of her architecture, in the mathematical accuracy of the construction of the pyramids, in the subserviency of ornament to correctness of detail, by which there is no mistaking a head of an early period for one of a later, or one of foreign origin from a native-born, on her monuments; and finally, in the astrological zodiacals that adorn her later temples, and point to the constellations pending over their dedication, as at Esnah and Dendara, there is evidently traceable the scientific spirit that made Egypt from the remotest antiquity the land of insight into the mysteries of nature — the land of Chemi[2] — the land, pre-eminently, of scientific lore. Hence it is that while Egypt had a poetry, a literature of her own, it was subservient to her art and industry; nothing of it remains but the fragments existing on her monuments. Her primary conception was scientific, and that gave life and being to all else. Her spirit still lives in her monuments. Through them we know her people as they lived and acted from the remotest times—prior to Moses, prior to Joseph, prior to Abraham.

Though Greece received her architecture from Egypt, as she did her alphabet from Phœnicia, still all her structures have a characteristic phase that

[1] "Popolo veramente singolare ed unico nelle storie, per avere ogni opera usato a conservarsi fino nella piú tarda posterita tutto intero."—*I Monumenti dell' Egitto, Mon. de Culte.*

[2] Whence our Chemistry.

marks them as Grecian. The grace and symmetry pervading column, frieze, and architrave —

> "The whole so measured true, so lessen'd off
> By fine proportion, that the marble pile
> . . . . . light as fabrics looked,
> That from the magic wand aërial rise"—

partake of the innate beauty of her language, and symbolize that harmony in her spiritual and physical development, which produced a corresponding harmony in her poetry and her sculpture, and made Greece supreme in the expression of physical beauty.

The spirit of childlike faith that inspired the ennobling legend of the Holy Grail, and built up the *Summa*, and impelled those eight Crusadal waves to wash out with their blood the desecration to which had been subjected the places sanctified by their Saviour's presence when on earth — that same beautiful spirit breathes in the Gothic cathedral, with its graceful spires lost in their heavenward direction, its sombre aisles inspiring awe and adoration rather than melancholy or gloom — the whole diffusing through the soul a feeling of prayerfulness.

Architecture has been called "frozen music,"[1] and better still, "the poetry of repose."[2] It were more correct, if not equally pointed, to consider it the stone embodiment of a people's genius — a grand hieroglyphic, which, when rightly deciphered, reveals the spirit in which a people thinks and works.

Let us test this criterion by applying it to our own age. In architecture we have nothing new, nothing

[1] Madame de Stael, *De l'Allemagne.*

[2] Craik, *Eng. of Shakspeare.*

essentially different from that of other times; instead, we find a conglomeration of various styles—Grecian, Byzantine, Gothic—jumbled together with no unity of plan, and therefore without the characteristic spirit that inspired any of them; for we lack the strong natures and simple faith of the mediæval ages; we seem to possess but a small share of that sense of symmetry and the beautiful so common among the Greeks, as we have almost totally disregarded our physical training, the great school in which they cultivated that taste; and therefore be the style Grecian or Gothic, it has lost its meaning for us.

And in literature? Let us see. We make strong efforts to revive the classical spirit, forgetful that as a people living under an entirely different order of things, and breathing the purer atmosphere of Christian principles, even when professing to ignore Christianity, we are out of all tune with those ideas and ways that gave life and being to paganism. In like manner we love to sing again of Arthur and the Round Table, and to restore the legends of the Middle Ages to their pristine splendor. It were well could we only recall the simple faith and earnestness of those times, and drive out that sceptical spirit that chills the noblest aims of life and gnaws at the vitals of our civilization. Not that we wish to return to those days. We enjoy blessings that they knew not; and for them we thank the Giver of all good things. The present has its own function in the great chain of the ages. An epoch may partially mar the views of the unchanging Presence that presides over the march of society. But He knows how to wait. He

patiently abides His time to set things to right, when man's perverse will turns them aside from their true path. Centuries are but as moments with Him to whom all past and future are a continual present.

But these mediæval legends never come home to the hearts of moderns with that realizing force with which they were accepted by the people whose thoughts and aspirations they represent. You admire the *Parcival* of Wolfram von Eschenbach; you scan its construction with critic's eye; you are in rapture over descriptions simple, beautiful as the ideal in the poet's mind; but you smile at the spirit of credulity running through the poem; your criterion of epic construction is shattered by such an opening as this:

> "Wo Zweifel nah dem Herzen wohnt,
> Das wird der Seele schlimm gelohnt."[1]

But here is the inner soul—the essential life — of the poem. Not considering it as such, you have been dissecting a corpse. This horror for doubt runs through all mediæval literature. You find it in Dante. It is the "open sesame" by which he enters the world of spirits:

> "Qui si convien lasciare ogni sospetto,
> Ogni viltà convien che qui sia morta."[2]

You find it in Tennyson. Launcelot encounters two lions at the entrance to the enchanted towers of Carbouck. He speaks:

[1] When doubt takes up his lodgings in the heart,
In payment he'll make it full sorely smart.

[2] Here all suspicion needs must be abandoned,
All cowardice must needs be here extinct.—LONGFELLOW.

> "With sudden-flaring manes
> These two great beasts rose upright like a man;
> Each gript a shoulder and I stood between;
> And, when I would have smitten them, heard a voice,
> *Doubt not, go forward; if thou doubt, the beasts*
> *Will tear thee piecemeal.*"[1]

To such language as this the critic of to-day is inclined to say, "Words! words!" but had the poet omitted it, he would have raised a mere skeleton in resuscitating the legend; for the spirit that gave it life and being would not be there.

To be more than notional, to be felt and almost instinctively appreciated as a matter of course, the expression — the predominant idea of literature, its vivifying principle — must be the expression of the spirit of the age we live in.

Looking to other departments of literature, we perceive that the test still holds. In history, our knowledge of Oriental languages, hieroglyphics, and cuneiform inscriptions has rendered us more critical; and we have not been altogether unsuccessful in rehabilitating certain epochs in the far past. Fiction is more universally read now than at any other era in literature; but fiction is only the drama in prosaic detail. In journalism we are pre-eminent. It is to-day, among human agencies, the greatest power on earth for good as well as for evil; but its impressions are as fleeting as time, and, like those of time, are generally traced in ruin. Thus we find that our age is in literature what it is in architecture — an age of patchwork and reconstruction.

[1] Holy Grail.

CHAPTER VI.

THE LAW OF LITERARY EPOCHS.

THE intellectual development of society is like that of the individual. It has its years of puberty, when it waxes in power and influence; then comes its period of finished manhood, when it seems at a stand-still, and self-possessed and conscious of its greatness and ability, it gives mature utterance to its thoughts; then it wanes and crumbles into dissolution; its voice grows cracked; its sayings are no longer heeded, and its broken sentences and wandering words excite the pity of those who knew that voice when rich and full, that language when graceful and elegant, those words when laden with deep import.

To the period of a nation's maturity our attention is at present directed. It is preceded by one of slow preparation, when the elements and energies of a nation are combining, and it is gathering strength, and becoming a recognized power in determining the world's destiny. This time of preparation is for a people what youth is for the individual — what the formation of stem and leaf is for the plant — a necessity for its after-greatness, when it stands forth clothed in its full power and complete energies. Then the shackles of youth are thrown off. The nation's personality becomes entire. Its civilization attains its most perfect development. Its language is the mirror of its power, maturity, and self-confidence. It par-

takes of the external grace and polish which society affects at such periods. It is the rounded expression of its genius, and the standard of utterance for all after-times. Then we look for the graceful and finished composition, the successful development of the panorama of life, and the not ineffectual efforts to solve the world-riddle, especially in the drama. Intellectual clusters invariably appear at such times, and shed a glory on their nation, and give to the date of their appearance the name of the golden era.

In contemplating these epochs, we must say that their formation is in obedience to law. All these pinnacles of literary excellence and political and social greatness, presenting so many common traits in nations that seem in other matters to be opposite poles, cannot be without design. We look along the mountain-ranges of the earth, and we notice each capped by one peak towering higher than all others —its summit ever covered with snow — and we know that such a peak was the centre and source of vast glacial forces whose marks we read to-day long after their work has been accomplished; we know that Nature exerted her energies more abundantly at that point than at any other in the whole range; and we know that Nature is ruled by law. We search the heavens, and behold vast clusters of stars beautifying the immense dome above us, and catch faint glimpses of others in a state of formation, even as our own earth was evolved from nebulous matter; and we know that the spheres of heaven move in obedience to the laws to which they were subjected at creation's dawn. We further know and believe that the same

Mind that governs matter guards humanity with a care infinitely superior. We therefore consider these epochs, not as the result of any individual effort, not as a fortuitous meeting of circumstances, not as being due to chance of any kind; but solely to a law presiding over all particular facts of history — a law beyond the control of human power, and in obedience to which society moves.

The law of literary epochs is this: when a nation has grown to maturity and arrived at the pinnacle of her prosperity, she possesses a strong sense of security, and devotes herself to peaceful pursuits, especially to literature and architecture, and gives utterance to her thoughts in language strong, clear, effective, such as becomes her maturity and dignity. Wherever there has been an advanced civilization, it has been adorned by such a golden era of letters.

The Elizabethan era — the age of Shakspeare and Bacon—was of this kind.[1] And about the same time, when Spain was the greatest power in Europe, both in material resources and extent of dominion, she possessed Lope de Vega, Cervantes, and Calderon.

[1] The age of Queen Anne is generally called the Augustan age of literature. In the time of Addison and Pope, of Swift and Arbuthnot, *society* is more refined, and language has a polish that verges on mannerism. Wit polishes; and this was pre-eminently an age of wits. In the Elizabethan era the contemporary nations of Europe were far more advanced in civilization. "England," says Father Thébaud, "as a nation, was at that period only just beginning to emerge from barbarism, and, in fact, was the last of the European nations to adopt civilized customs and manners in the political, civil, and social relations of life." But that grand galaxy of dramatic poets from Marlowe to Ben Jonson has all the characteristic traits of a golden epoch, and conforms in all essentials to the law enunciated.

Such another era was the age of Louis XIV., with its Corneille, its Molière, and its Racine. Such was the age of Leo X., the age of art-worship and enthusiasm for the pagan ideal. Such was the age of Augustus, when Horace and Virgil and Livy wrote their graceful productions. Such, about a century earlier, was the age of Vikramaditya in India, when "nine pearls" adorned his court, the brightest of whom was Kalidasa.[1] Such, centuries before, was the golden epoch of Pericles, which culminated in the grand works of Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides.

That the two pinnacles of Roman glory did not, like the others mentioned, excel in the drama, may be accounted for. The amphitheatre in the Rome of old was too real; there the people saw action intensified in the death-struggle between the gladiators and the ferocious beasts of the forest; their tastes grew vitiated in the contemplation of such spectacles, and they in consequence flouted the mere imaginary scenes of the drama. They were not a people of dreams. They should have reality; and swayed as they then were by Epicurean principles, their realistic natures were amused only by vice and cruelty and the pleasures of the banquet, to such a degree as to well merit the strong rebuke of the satirist:

[1] "It was at the court of this monarch that flourished nine of the celebrated sages and poets of the second era of Indian literature; and among these was Calidas, the author of the beautiful dramatic poem of 'Sacontala,' so generally known by the English and German translations. It was in the age of Vikramaditya that the later poetry and literature of India, of which Calidas was so bright an ornament, reached its full bloom."— SCHLEGEL, *Philosophy of History*, Lect. V., p. 180.

"And those who once, with unresisted sway,
Gave armies, empires, everything, away,
For two poor claims have long renounced the whole,
And only ask — the Circus and the Dole." [1]

The age of Leo X. was too much an age of literary dilletantism to produce anything original in letters. Men laid too great stress on the turn of a phrase, and were too slavish in their admiration for the classical literature of Rome, to possess anything peculiarly their own. The *Transfiguration* of Raphael is the real glory of this age.

The normal literature, then, of the golden eras of a nation is the drama. This we should look for, considering the origin of both a people's civilization and its drama. Each has its roots in religion. And as a nation grows powerful, and acquires all the refinements of civilization, the ease and security in which she lives, foster views of self-sufficiency; the religious element becomes weakened; her ideas grow secularized, and her literature expresses her actuating principles. Hence the drama no longer deals with the mysteries of religion; it enters the broader and more palpable field of humanity. But mark the result. After a nation has become completely secularized, corrupt human nature begins to play havoc, and she declines. Her energies soon become exhausted; her literature grows weak and sickly; she is only a shadow of her former greatness.[2]

[1] "—— qui dabat olim
Imperium, fasces, legiones, omnia; nunc se
Continet, atque duas tantum res anxius optat,
Panem et circenses." — JUVENAL, Sat. x.

[2] See *Velleius Paterculus*, Bk. I., chaps. xvi., xvii., xviii.

CHAPTER VII.

INFLUENCING AGENCIES IN LITERATURE.

WHERE, in literature, shall we seek those agencies that have influenced and colored, so to speak, whatever it possesses of good and excellent? Not in criticism, for that is based upon a knowledge of the master-pieces of poetry and eloquence. Not in poetry, for the poet, though influencing after-times, is himself the product of influence; he moulds the ideas he finds popular; he is the child of his age. Not in eloquence, for the orator simply tells the people that which they already know. To something prior to all these must we look for the influencing agencies of literature. We must look to religion. Men believed in the gods before Homer sang of them. We must look to philosophy. Men's philosophical opinions influence their actions long before they undertake to account to themselves for holding them. Balmes says, truly: "When philosophers dispute, humanity itself in a sense disputes."[1] And it were well to remember that religious and philosophic problems of deepest import are one. Modern subjectivism, entirely occupied as it is with the barren question of knowing, has broken up that beautiful interdependence, to the detriment of both religion and philosophy.

Let us, then, cursorily consider the sources of those doctrines and opinions that have combined to educate humanity to its present degree of intelligence. We will begin with the East.

[1] *Fundamental Philosophy*, Vol. I., chap. i.

SECTION I.—THE EAST.

The cradle of humanity is also the cradle of thought, of knowledge, of literature. There originated the germs of nearly every doctrine that agitated Europe. Ideas are found in China, in the philosophy of Lao-Tseu,[1] that seem to be more indigenous to Palestine. In mediæval times, the Albigensian, Waldensian, and Manichean heresies are traceable to the mysterious East. There, too, arose the Mahometanism that sits an incubus on Central Asia, and the Christianity that underlies our civilization. Whatever is truthful and profound — all that grand array of noble sentiments relative to the Divinity, in Plato, is of Oriental origin. "Plato," says De Maistre, "had read much and travelled much; there are in his writings a thousand proofs that he had searched the real source of sound traditions. He united in his own person the sophist and the theologian, or, if it may be rather so expressed, he was both Greek and Chaldean."[2] The Pythagorean school — perhaps the profoundest of antiquity — was indebted to the East for its most characteristic doctrines — for instance, the doctrine of metempsychosis and the scientific principles of numbers and mathematics.

Thus it is that the East, while itself ever remaining at a dead level, and apparently incapable of rising beyond a certain point, furnishes the whole world with the elements of a higher civilization, which grow and flourish

[1] Lao-Tseu lived in the sixth century B. C.

[2] *On the Pope*, Bk. IV., chap. vii. He adds this significant remark: "Plato is not understood unless, in reading him, this idea be always present to the mind."

and bear fruit in their transplanted soils with a productiveness that they know not in their native land. Its unprogressive character makes the past from the remotest time a continuous present, by which we of the more active part and greater energy can trace our origin and measure our progress.[1]

SECTION II. — GREECE.

We are still, to an extent, under the immediate influence of Greek letters. Homer and Sophocles are still our standards, each in his own department; we yet have recourse to Aristotle for canons of criticism; and as Plato was authority for St. Augustine, and the Stagyrite is the basis of St. Thomas; and that both these Christianized intelligences moulded mediæval thought, which in its turn is the educator of the modern intellect — to these Grecian philosophers are we indebted for much more than we can express. Greece gave posterity her best. Her sophistry and fickleness of character she retained, and they were the ruin of her. But her magnificent epic, her lofty ode, her pro-

[1] "We find the Chinese just as their oldest literature describes them; we have the wandering Monguls and Turcomans, with their wagon-houses and herds, leading the Scythian's life; we see the Brahman performing the same ablutions in the sacred river, going through the same works of painful ceremony, as did the ancient gymnosophists, or, rather, as is prescribed in his sacred books of earlier dates. And still more, we discover the Arab drinking at the same wells, traversing the same paths, as did the Jew of old, on his pilgrim journeys; tilling the earth with the same implements, and at the same seasons; building his house on the same model, and speaking almost the same language, as the ancient possessors of the promised land." — CARDINAL WISEMAN, *Lectures on Science and Revealed Religion*, Lect. x., p. 363.

found philosophy, her graceful architecture, her inimitable master-pieces in the plastic arts — these we have, and by them we are still educated.

SECTION III. — ROME.

Rome was a nation of one idea, and that idea was Rome. Her ambition knew no bounds. She fought and conquered and brought the East and the West submissive to her feet. The arm of the sturdy son of the forest gave strength to her ranks. The wealth of the effeminate child of the East flowed into her coffers, and brought with it the luxury and consequent effeminacy that afterwards weakened her. All nations feared her; all courted her protection. They received it; but at the price of their liberty. Her constant intercourse with these nations, and the complexity of relations arising from home and foreign rule, gave rise to a jurisprudence that, to all intents and purposes, is to-day at the basis of the government of every civilized country.[1] In jurisprudence, her genius expanded to the full extent of her greatness. There is its true expression, rather than in her literature, the best portions of which are of Grecian inspiration.

While Rome was still great, there arrived the fulfilment of time, the central fact of all history, towards which the traditions of primitive nations point, and from which all after-events take their march and receive their significancy — the time which Virgil felt

[1] "It may have disappeared in name, but it survives in reality." — HADLEY, *Introduction to Roman Law.*

dawn upon the horizon of events, and of which he sang according to his knowledge. The Redeemer of men came upon earth. Henceforth Christianity becomes a visible factor in the world's doings.

SECTION IV.—THE ALEXANDRIANS.

That was a memorable day when St. Paul spoke in the Areopagus of the unknown God to whom the Athenians had an altar erected, and converted Dionysius. From that day, Christianity has had philosophers to plead her cause, and to whom she can point as proof of her power over intelligence in its strongest condition.

The Eclectic School of Alexandria was Christian. Its brightest light, St. Clement, gave its true principle: "By philosophy I do not mean the Stoic, or the Platonic, or the Epicurean, or the Aristotelian; but whatever has been well said in each of these sects, teaching justice and a science pervaded by piety—this eclectic whole I call philosophy."[1] This is the true philosophical spirit; and while men worked in this spirit, while they separated the truth from the error in each system, and made all schools subservient to the unchangeable truth that is above all schools and all systems, they did great good, and Alexandria was the focus whence emanated all the learning that enlightened both Greek and Roman. But the Christian schools died out; Eclecticism was

[1] Φυλοσοφιαν δὲ, οὐ τὴν Στωϊκὴν λέγω, ουδὲ τὴν Πλατωνικὴν, ἠτὴν Ἐπικουρειόντε, καὶ Ἀριστοτελικήν αλλ' ὅσα εἴρεται παῤ ἑκαστῃ των αιρεσεων τουτων καλῶς, δικαιοσυνην μετα ευσεβῆς ἐπιστήμης ἐκδιδάσκοντα, τοῦτο συμπαν τὸ εκλεκτικὸν φιλοσοφιαν φημι.—*Stromatum*, Lib. I., cap. vii.

abandoned for Syncretism; philosophers endeavored to reconcile contradictory systems; all bonds of unity were lost; the Alexandrian schools became a chaos of disputation; the pure light of Christianity was enveloped in the mists of paganism and Oriental fictions, and became the butt of open hostility on the part of the new school. It was the Neo-Platonist Maximus that inspired the Emperor Julian with that hatred for Christianity that burst forth in his cruel edicts against it, though the religion in which he had been raised. It was the Neo-Platonist school that, more than any other single cause, helped to extinguish the Christian flame that had burned so brightly in Africa. And again, it was the Neo-Platonist Porphyry that planted the seed of that long dispute concerning Realism and Nominalism in the days of Roscelin, Abelard, and St. Bernard. The dispute is as old as Plato and Aristotle, and Porphyry transmits it in all its nakedness. "Concerning genus and species," he says, "I will abstain from saying whether they are in the understanding alone, or are corporeal or incorporeal things; and whether they are separated from sensible objects and placed in non-sensible ones, or exist in the former."[1] Genera and species are realities, distinct from individual things, though inseparable from them. "Genus," says Brownson, "has relation to generation, and is as real as the individual, for it generates the individual. . . . . The genus

[1] "Mox de generibus et speciebus, illud quidem sive subsistant, sive in solis nudis intellectibus posita sint, sive subsistentia, corporalia sint an incorporalia, et utrum separata a sensibilibus an insensibilibus posita, et circa hæc consistentia, dicere recusabo."—*Quoted in Boëthius.*

is always causative in relation to the species, and the species in relation to the individual."[1]

Modern Transcendentalism has many traits of resemblance with Neo-Platonism. The latter arraigns religion and revelation before its tribunal; so does the former. Plotinus is a pantheist; so is Fichte. The one teaches that alone to be true knowledge in which the object known is identical with the thinking subject. This is the one point on which the modern school is agreed. According to Schelling, nature is a manifestation of the absolute, and its pure essence is identity. According to Fichte, "the ego and the non-ego are both equally primitive acts of the ego;" that is, subject and object are identical. Philosophy has its cycles.

The fourth century of the Christian era, with which we now find ourselves face to face, is in the pagan world a period of criticism. Paganism is making its last struggle; but it is a struggle in death. Still Christianity does not breathe freely enough to possess a poetry of its own. The laureate of Rome in a Christian court is Claudian, who knows Christianity, and still lives a pagan.[2] And though he is saturated with paganism, its poets and myths — though, like a

[1] *Catholic World*, for March, 1869.

[2] As the following epigram shows. Jacobus, a military prefect, disapproves of his poetry, and he writes:

> Per cinerem Pauli, per cani limina Petri,
> Ne laceres versus, dux Jacobe, meos.
> Sic tua pro clypeo sustentet pectora Thomas,
> Et comes ad bellum Bartholomœus eat.
> Sic ope sanctorum, non barbarus irruat Alpes;
> Sic tibi det vires sancta Susanna tuas.
>
> EPIG. 27.

true Roman, Rome is his idol, and he therefore has occasionally faint glimpses of genuine poetic inspiration — he is still but a panegyrist.

Section V.—The Early Fathers.

But if the pagan world is on the decline in letters, for the Christian world it is a glorious epoch. Then the primitive fathers — the golden-mouthed John, the Gregories, Nazeanzen and Nyssa, Bazil, Jerome, and Ambrose — all of whom flourished between A. D. 340 and 420—men all of them of edifying lives, of genius imbued with learning, eloquence, and zeal for religion — explained the doctrines of Christianity, fought heresy, lessened and prevented scandals, weakened paganism, spread the gospel, and profoundly impressed the people at large. To-day the sermon is taken as a matter of course. It is considered a something to be endured, seldom enjoyed, and then simply as an intellectual treat. But in those early days it was measured by a different standard. Then it was new, and was looked upon with admiration and enthusiasm; and its novelty and power made it exercise a strong influence for good. Sacred eloquence is a power unknown in pagan literature. It is the creature of Christianity. The pagan was accustomed to offer his sacrifice, say the prescribed prayer, and go his way. There are times when man is better disposed to listen to good counsel. Christianity, which has at all times a word for all classes, chose that the most opportune to speak, and impress her sublime doctrines on his heart. And, therefore,

in the temple of religion, when the clash and clamor of man's worldly occupations are hushed before the Divinity, when the prayerful disposition of his soul disposes him to think on the spiritual world of which the ceremonies remind him, and he feels that there is a higher and better life after which he ought to strive—at that solemn moment the Christian minister, in the name of the God he worships, strengthens the feelings then possessing his heart, addresses him with a conviction that only religious zeal knows, and appeals to passions—not of national honor, not of mere personal integrity, not of self-interest—but awakens passions never before addressed in assembly; rather creates a passion in which all others are absorbed—a passion that elevates man above the natural plane of his dignity, makes him superior to himself, and equal to deeds from which human nature unassisted would shrink in fear and horror; that of loving, serving, imitating his Lord and Redeemer, the Crucified One. This is the sublime origin of sacred eloquence.

These early fathers knew and felt their indebtedness, among human agencies, to the ancient classics for the effective language of which they were masters, and they esteemed and cherished them accordingly. Thus St. Jerome teaches them in Bethlehem, and in reply to Rufinus, who accuses him of being too fond of the pagan authors, pleads their cause with eloquence. He speaks of "the sacredness of antiquity," shows that St. Paul quoted Aratus, Epimenides, and Menander, and in allusion to the Jewish law of purifying captives and admitting them as Israelites, he adds: "What wonder, then, that I, struck by the

science of the age in the beauty of its features and the grace of its discourses, should wish to transform it from the slave it is now into an Israelite." Origen (185–253) had previously made use of the same figure: "Whatever we find that is well and rationally said in the works of our enemies, if we read anything that is said wisely and according to knowledge, we ought to cleanse it, and from that knowledge which they possess to remove and cut off all that is dead and useless."[1] St. Basil likewise becomes the advocate of the classics against those who would be for their total destruction: "As dyers," says this doctor of broad views, "dispose by certain preparations the tissue which is destined for the dye, and then steep it in the purple, so, in order that the idea of good may be traced ineffaceably in our souls, we shall first initiate them in the outer knowledge, and then will listen to the hallowed teaching of the mysteries."[2] Religion is not opposed to literature as the expression of the true, the good, and the beautiful. It is only when it becomes the vehicle of falsehood and immorality that she condemns it. One of the greatest intellects within the gift of humanity, and one of the most brilliant ornaments of religion, rose to saintship in the path of literary pursuits. Literature was the natural mould in which St. Augustine (354–420) was stamped.

Schooled in the philosophies of the East and the West, after an eager search through the fogs of Manicheism and the mazes of Neo-Platonism for the

[1] In *Levit. Hom.*, vii. See Maitland's "Dark Ages," No. XI.—*Dark Age View of Profane Learning*, p. 174.

[2] Ozanam, *Civilization in the Fifth Century*, Vol. I., p. 228.

fountain of truth, at which alone his boundless aspirations could be slaked, he at last arrives in the broad daylight of Catholicity, and in her doctrines and sacraments satisfies his hitherto insatiable craving after truth. He is the epitome of his age. He followed all its leading phantoms until he rose above his times into the regions of holiness, whither they never followed. His *Confessions* is a sublime hymn of praise to God for having led him out of error — a profound, philosophic essay on the supremely good and beautiful, in which, in the vagaries of his own life, are the practical illustrations of the vanities of the systems through which he passed. "Neither is this done by the words of the flesh and outward sounds, but by the words of the soul, and the loud cry of the thought which is known to thy ear."[1] It proves that neither Pagan, Platonist, nor Manichæan has the clue to the enigma of life; but that in Christianity alone is this to be found. The central idea is that God alone is true, is beautiful, is good, is great, and worthy of our love: "Thou hast wounded my heart with thy word, and I fell in love with thee."[2] In consideration of that love he would throw himself away, and make choice of God; and therefore it is that he confesses his sins: "That so I may be ashamed of myself, and may throw away myself, and may make choice of thee."[3] And this idea is also fundamental in his *City of God;* for he characterizes the two cities, the earthly and the heavenly, according to the nature of the loves by which they have been formed: "Accordingly, two cities have been formed by two loves — the

[1] *Conf.*, Lib. X., cap. ii. [2] Ibid., cap. vi. [3] Ibid., cap. ii.

earthly by the love of self, even to the contempt of God; the heavenly by the love of God, even to the contempt of self. The former, in a word, glories in itself; the latter in the Lord."[1] This work is the first instalment of the philosophy of history, which was afterwards developed by Bossuet and Schlegel. He witnessed the crash of the Roman empire under the blows of Alaric. The greatest power that ever ruled the world had fallen. Sophists raised a hue and cry against Christianity as the primal cause of all the evils that befel. "No wonder," they said, "that Rome should fall; her altars were deserted, her gods despised, and Christians were plotting her ruin." To answer these objections, St. Augustine writes this, his master-piece, and "the encyclopædia of the fifth century."[2] He investigates the causes of the rise and progress of Rome, shows the secret of her strength, and points out the reason of her decline and fall, with a masterly hand, and upon principles that no historian can ignore.[3] He then examines the theological and philosophical systems of paganism, and proves that in them there is much error, and that whatever truth they possess is realized in Christianity.[4] The rest of the work is devoted to the consideration of the two cities, the heavenly and the earthly, and their origin and destiny. There are those who smile when they read that the two cities began with the good and bad angels. But when we translate the idea into modern phraseology, we find in it an incon-

[1] *City of God*, Bk. xiv. 28. [2] Poujoulat.
[3] Bks. i., ii., iii., iv., v. The fifth is especially noteworthy.
[4] Bks. vi., vii., viii., ix., x. Bk. viii. is especially noteworthy.

testable truth. By the two cities he means, first, the aggregate of God-loving, God-serving, and God-fearing persons on the earth — all true and faithful Christians; secondly, the aggregate of God-despising, self-loving and self-seeking persons—the worldly-minded, who look but to the present. Now, evidently, the different spirits that animated the good and bad angels are the same that live in these classes. We all are guided by one or the other. After showing where truth and stability are alone to be found, this great genius ends where all his works end, from the time he first exclaimed, "Do we love anything but the fair and beautiful?"[1] to the hour he breathed his last — in God.

St. Augustine was cherished in the Middle Ages, was not forgotten at the Renaissance, and is still a favorite with moderns. In endeavoring to grasp the expression of his genius, one image recurs to the mind — that of the ocean, first tossed and lashed about by storm, then calm and clear, the wreck of the previous tempest floating on its bosom. Throughout his writings float the wrecks of shattered systems and fragments of dead issues, but beneath their surface are the solid gems of truth.

About a century later (470–524) Boëthius lives, is persecuted, suffers, and writes his beautiful work on *The Consolations of Philosophy*. It was a favorite in the Middle Ages. Alfred the Great translated it into Anglo-Saxon, and Chaucer into Middle English. The work is the product of superior talent highly cultivated, acted upon by external agencies. He who

[1] *Conf.*, Lib. IV., cap. xiii.

knows but the sunshine of life, lives in ignorance of the world and himself. Man's worth is tested in the crucible of suffering. The *Consolations* would, in all probability, have remained unwritten had Boëthius ended his days while basking in the smiles of his sovereign; but in the chill shadow of the prison his soul expanded and rose above adversity, and he wrote the thought that endeared his name to posterity — that in virtue alone is true happiness to be found; and that, in reality, adversity is superior to prosperity.[1] This thought is the burden of the work; therefore it is that Dante speaks of the author as

> "The saintly soul, that shows
> The world's deceitfulness to all who hear him."[2]

Section VI. — Christianity and Barbarism.

And now, for centuries, the Church works continuously, works strenuously, works without once tiring or asking for a truce, at the great task of leavening the mass of barbarism that inundated and swept away the old civilization, and builds upon its ruins the new civilization, the benefits of which we enjoy to-day. Her religious orders guard in their monasteries, with the most jealous solicitude, the ancient classics from the ravages of the barbarian who, not knowing their use, would have destroyed them as useless. Her

[1] "Etenim plus hominibus reor adversum quam prosperam prodesse fortunam." — *De Consol.*, Lib. II., Prosa viii.

[2] "L'anima santa, che il mondo fallace
Fa manifesto a chi di lei ben ode."
Paradiso, Canto x., 125, 126.

clergy impose upon him the sweet yoke of the gospel; and by means of the sacraments they dispense to him, the prayers they teach him, and the moral truths they inculcate, they tame his fierce nature, initiate him into the practice of leading a settled and peaceful life, and thus lay the foundation of prosperity and happiness. They establish schools and universities to educate him. The work of refining and enlightening him was slow. Not unfrequently would this child of nature break through all bounds; but when the sea of passion that tore his breast would have subsided, he would return to religion repentant for the deeds of violence of which he was guilty, and religion would heal the wounds of his soul, encourage him in the path of virtue, and teach him to forgive, that he may be forgiven, and to respect his neighbor in person and property. Thus is religion the creator of our modern civilization. Ask not for books or authors while such a sublime work is going on. It is in itself an epic in action. Slavery was abolished;[1] woman was elevated and respected; the hand of vengeance was stayed by "the truce of God;" chivalry was based upon principles of honor and virtue; and "with the virtues of chivalry was associated a new and purer spirit of love, an inspired homage for genuine female worth, which was now revered as the acme of human excellence, and, maintained by religion itself under the image of a Virgin Mother, infused into all hearts a mysterious sense of the purity of love."[2]

[1] For a detailed account of the attitude of the Church towards slavery from the beginning, see Balmes' *European Civilization*, chaps. xv.–xix., and the decrees of Councils quoted in the Appendix, pp. 430–432.

[2] A. W. von Schlegel, *Lectures on Dramatic Literature*, p. 25.

The poetry of these ages tells of the spirit by which they were animated. That the Christian spirit was gaining ground, we learn from the popularity, as early as the ninth century, of songs based upon scriptural subjects.[1] Then, also, began to grow into shape, and float among the people in fragments, those legends which, in the thirteenth century, were embodied in the Nibelungenlied, in what Heine calls "a language of stone." It is a people's pagan traditions interwoven with Christian sentiments. You scarcely know that the personages are Christian until you come upon a Crimhild and a Brunhild quarrelling for precedence at the church door, or a Monk Ilsan with the incompatible appendages of cowl and sword — a fact that goes to show the necessity of the stringent decrees of the National Council presided over by St. Boniface, forbidding priests and monks to take up arms even against the Mussulman; and furthermore, adds the Council, "we forbid all bishops, priests, clerics, or monks to hunt in the forests with packs of hounds, sparrow-hawks, or falcons."

But the Nibelungenlied is a poem of more than national interest. It is another expression of the same old Aryan thought that is the vital principle of the Grecian and Hindu epics, cast in a mould different from either, and tinged with the characteristic traits of the Teuton race. It is another effort to unravel

[1] Those known to us are: *The Harmony of the Evangelists*, in old Saxon, published by Schmeller (Stuttgard, 1830); *Krist, or Book of the Evangelists* (Königsberg, 1831); *The Song of the Samaritan Woman*, and a poem on *The Last Judgment*. To this period also belongs *The Legend of St. George*.

the entanglement of events that arises when generosity and valor, craft and cunning and jealousy meet, act and counteract — the golden apple of contention in this case, as well as in the Iliad and Ramayana, being beauty.

In the thirteenth century, at the time this poem received its last touch, the poet was esteemed and patronized, and poetry wielded influence. "Believers," says Tieck, "sang of faith; lovers, of love; knights described knightly actions and battles, and loving, believing knights were their chief audience. The spring, beauty, gayety, were objects that could never tire; great duels and deeds of arms carried away every hearer, the more surely and stronger they were painted; and as the pillars and dome of the church encircled the flock, so did religion, as the highest, encircle poetry and reality; and every heart in equal love humbled itself before her."[1] Many a grim baron, by poet's song, was moved to muster his serfs and seek the Holy Land. The entreaties of Walther von der Vogelweide assisted the tardy purpose of Frederick II. to undertake a crusade. Many a feud was hushed by the song of peace. The bishop and magistrate of Assisi are in open warfare, when St. Francis passes by, singing a beautiful canticle to "his brother the sun;" his earnest, burning words pierce their hearts; their wrath subsides; the poet sings on; they can no longer resist the torrent of inspiration that gushes from his heart; they dissolve into tears and embrace.[2] The incident is characteristic.

[1] *Minnelieder aus dem Schwäbischen Zeitalter*, Vorrede x.

[2] Montalambert, *Life of St. Elizabeth of Hungary*, Int.

Section VII.—The Scholastics.

But that which occupied the mediæval mind in a special manner was philosophy. It was particularly studied as the handmaid of the all-absorbing idea of the age — Religion. It is a mistake to consider scholasticism as a tissue of hair-splittings. Nominalism and Realism had more than words at their foundation. They involved doctrines. The people were aware of their importance; for we read that Roscelin, the champion of Nominalism, was compelled to retract his errors to preserve himself from their fury.[1] Religion was their passion, and anything bearing on religion they took interest in. Had these disputes been idle subtleties, as represented by modern philosophers, they would not have created the commotions they did.[2]

But scholasticism, from the ninth to the thirteenth centuries, was only fragmentary. There was mingled with it a strange jargon of Arabic, Judaic, and Grecian philosophy; and while it was dwindling to nothingness in the hands of the orthodox by their vain disputations, the scoffers at Christianity were weaving out of it a network of objections in which to ensnare the unwary. A master-mind was needed to sift the

[1] "Le chanoine de Compiègne, mandé au concile de Soissons (1092), y rétracta ses erreurs, pour se soustraire à la fureur du peuple." — Barbe, *Cours de Philosophie*, p. 655.

[2] It is a mistake to assert, as Mr. Mill does, that the Church imposed Realism "as a religious duty in the Middle Ages." When William of Champeaux asserted that humanity was the essence of each human individual, the Church did not impose it "as a religious duty in the Middle Ages." And Gilbert de la Porée "was a realist, and was condemned."

grain from the chaff, and gather in the whole in one grand system with a bearing and significancy that should place it beyond cavil. That master-mind appeared in the person of St. Thomas Aquinas. He brings to his task a genius labor-loving, well trained in all the learning of the age, intimate with the Scriptures, versed in the early Fathers, and complete master of the subject-matter he undertakes to arrange and systematize. He is an independent thinker, but he is no innovator. He accepts what the learning of the age provides for him, and makes the best of it. He finds Aristotle in possession, and he builds upon him. How magnificently, is known only to him who has pondered over the *Summa*, and realized the depth of thought, clearness of arrangement, and brilliant conceptions of which it is the embodiment.[1] And not the least source of amazement is the decision with which the almost inspired author touches upon questions that are at present agitating men's minds, but which were then mere germs in the womb of thought.[2]

The scholastic philosophy is said to be dead. It still lives in theology and the dogmatic teachings of Catholicity. When we speak of the matter and form

[1] "The master work of St. Thomas is the famous summation, *Summa Theologiæ*, which is one of the greatest monuments of the human mind in the Middle Age, and comprehends, with metaphysics, an entire system of morality, and even of politics; and that kind of politics, too, which is not at all servile." — COUSIN, *Hist. Mod. Phil.*, Tr. by O. W. Wight.

[2] *e. g.*, Prima Pars., quests. xlv., lxvii., Art. IV.; quests. lxxi., lxxii., Art. I., *On Creation and Genesis of the Species.* Also, Prima Pars., quest. xviii., Arts. II., III., and IV., *On Life.*

of the sacraments, and define the soul as "the form of the body," we are using language intelligible only in the light of the Aristotelian method. The two fundamental doctrines of scholasticism are, the principle of matter and form, and the maxim, "there is nothing in the intellect that is not first in the senses." This latter principle must not be confounded with sensism, for the scholastics imposed a different meaning upon it. By it they wished to express the fact that sensation awakens the dormant faculties and trains the intellect, and that through it we have all our knowledge of external objects. They also admitted first principles or axioms — self-evident truths — independent of all external objects, and thus drew a broad line of distinction between themselves and the sensists.

It is fashionable for a certain class of scientists to sneer at what they consider the stupidity of those who would earnestly discuss the doctrine of "matter and form," as well as at the simplicity of the Church that would impose upon modern intelligences dogmas framed on that doctrine. They call it a thing obsolete. Now, as the doctrine was originally one of physics, let us examine it in the light of the last word of science.

With Aristotle, matter is not an aggregate of atoms; it is by itself a mere potentiality — a principle of all bodies — which, combined with form, gives them actuality.[1] Modern science teaches, with Boscovitch and Leibnitz, that all matter consists of indivisible and inextended atoms, endowed with forces that are attractive and repulsive, according to the distances at

1 Balmes, *Hist. de la Filosofia*, p. 525.

which they act;[1] that is, that matter is nothing without force. Thus, both scholastic and scientist are agreed that matter by itself is not a reality, and that it is determined by something distinct. "It is manifest," says St. Thomas, "that every actual existence has some form, and thus its matter is determined by its form."[2] And Faraday is with him. He says: "We know matter only by its forces."[3] Evidently, the "force" of one is the "form" of the other. Now, we are convinced beyond a shadow of doubt that—excepting purely spiritual forms, as the soul—modern science, when it understands itself, and scholastic philosophy are in harmony.

The primary idea of the scholastic "form" is activity. It determines the species—now arranging the crystalline structure, now appearing as the vital principle in vegetable matter, now as the soul of brutes, everywhere an energizing activity. This view coincides with Grove's definition of force. He calls it "that active principle inseparable from matter, which is supposed to induce its various changes."[4] To illustrate: oxygen and hydrogen combine in certain proportions and produce an entirely new substance, water. In scholastic phraseology there is here a new activity, that is, the form of water. But modern science also recognizes a new chemical force, acting in the combining of the elements so as to produce water. This force was not created; it was simply

[1] Bartlett, *Analytical Mechanics*, p. 17. Leibnitz, De primæ philosophiæ emendatione et notione substantiæ—*passim*.

[2] "Manifestum est quod omne existens in actu habet aliquam formam, et sic materia ejus est determinata per formam."—*Summa*, p. 1, quest. vii., Art. II.

[3] *The Conservation of Force.*

[4] *Correlation of Physical Forces*, p. 19.—ED. YOUMANS.

revived, having been dormant in the elements, and awaiting the occasion of their union. Neither does the scholastic philosopher conceive the form to have been created; it was potentially in the matter; "for matter," according to St. Thomas, "before receiving its form is capable of receiving many forms;"[1] that is, they exist in it potentially. Even when the form passes away, it is not said to be annihilated; it is only re-immersed in its subject, just as it is the general opinion of advanced scientists that no force is destroyed, that it is simply changed to some other, as chemical force to heat force, and that its sum is a constant quantity.[2] Thus we find the Aristotelian "force" and the modern "form" convertible. Therefore Dr. Mayer has actually defined forces as forms. "They are," he says, "different forms under which one and the same object makes its appearance."[3] Here is an act of reparation, complete as it is deserving, paid to the injured genius of scholasticism by modern science, unintentional though it be.

For centuries, mediæval intelligence revolved upon the hinges of these two principles, and it seemed as though in them it had found its limit. It is the general history of thought. The popular mind is slow in realizing an idea. It were therefore unphilosophic to blame any one period for that which is a law of all periods. We are told of each of God's works that after it had been created, "He saw that it was good."

[1] "Materia quidem per formam, inquantum materia, antequam recipiat formam est in potentia ad multas formas."—*Summa*, I p., qu. 7, Art. I.

[2] This implies no sanction of the materialistic doctrine of the eternity of matter and of force. Each is the product of the creative act.

[3] *The Mechanical Equivalent of Heat*, YOUMAN'S Ed., p. 346.

The reptile was good as well as the bird of the air; the blade of grass as well as the light that gave it beauty. He despised nothing that came forth at His creative words. The human intellect is also His creature. He defined its laws of operation. They are not, therefore, to be depreciated. Neither is Scholasticism, one of their most glorious products, to be despised. It is good. It has its own functions. It is a link in the evolution of thought. It built up Christian theology on a scientific basis; it fixed the precision of terms; it imposed this precision on the new languages that were then about to become the vehicles of national literatures. It is good, that period of syllogizing. It held the influx of materialism at bay; it carefully watched over the sacred fires burning at the shrine of learning, until in the march of society greater facilities were brought within the reach of men to satisfy their eagerness to know. It is good, that intellectual bridge between the ancient and the modern world. The shade of Virgil walks across it, and leaves his mantle of inspiration to Dante.

Dante is the poet of scholasticism. In his sublime allegory he has caught up and crystallized the spirit of the Middle Ages. Their philosophy, their politics, their religion, their aspirations are immortalized in its amber pages. He is the poet of Catholicity. The elevation of his genius places him above all parties. A fierce, unyielding Ghibelline, he reproves both Guelf and Ghibelline.[1] An enemy of the Temporal Power, he speaks of it with respect and venera-

[1] Si ch'è forte a veder qual piu si falli.—*Par.*, C. vii. 102.
So that 'tis hard to see who most offends.—CAREY.

tion.[1] Though he uses the myths of antiquity, still their subordination to the eminently Christian spirit of his poem, and especially the mystical flights of the *Paradise*, show how Christianity was becoming more and more part and parcel of mediæval intelligence. His lines, written with unparalleled vigor and terseness, bear profound significancy. If Shakspeare is the poet of humanity, Dante is the poet of thought.

Section VIII.—The Mystics.

But scholasticism is only one phase of mediæval thought. Many a learned mind, wearied with the disputes of the schools, sought refuge in mysticism. This was especially the case in the fourteenth century, after St. Thomas had put the last hand to the scholastic philosophy. Had some of those reactionary minds been two centuries later, they would have retired into themselves and lived sceptics. But theirs was still an age of faith and religious fervor, and they were not disposed to question the foundations of all knowledge, and summarize everything said or written into a "what know I?" They rather sought in the affections of the heart directed to the supremely good, and in the contemplation of the perfectly beautiful, the infinitely true that their philosophy revealed in a manner too dimly for them.

[1] Thus he says that Rome and the Roman empire:

> Fur stabilite per lo loco santo
> Usiede il successor del maggior Piero.
> *Inf.*, C. ii., 23–4.
> Established were to be the Holy Place,
> Where sits enthroned great Peter's princely race.

Mysticism has had at all times attraction for the human mind. It has created the Yogi of India and the hermit of the Thebaid. Both seek "vision by means of a higher light, and action under higher freedom."[1] But outside of Christianity mysticism generally ends in pantheism, immorality, and inaction. Christianity, by presenting for contemplation the sacred humanity of the Redeemer, places the only safe barrier to its abuse. The soul leaves reason and imagination behind, forgets itself, and all its faculties become entirely absorbed in the contemplation of the Divinity. In such a state it is only the greatest purity of life, and a total detachment from things earthly, that can save it from illusion. Imagine an age with aspirations for a more intimate acquaintance with the infinite truth than books could impart. Such was the fourteenth century. The mysticism of Italy at this period was Platonic, and therefore ideal. It was a learned mysticism. But in Germany, along the banks of the Rhine, it became the passion of the people. They flocked by thousands to hear Henry Suso and the celebrated Tauler. They received, remembered, and reported the words of these two great men with respect and veneration. They practised their counsels. Religious confraternities were formed, headed no longer by clergy, but by pious laymen. Tauler himself, in his mystical life, was the disciple of such a layman — the one that organized the society of the Friends of God. From this society emanated that flower of mystical life — the book of the *Imitation of Christ* — the unadulterated product of the spirit of

[1] This is Görres' definition of Mysticism.

Christianity, written with that characteristic simplicity and dignity that belong only to the sacred Scriptures. Its fundamental doctrine is that God alone is worthy of the intelligence, life, and aspirations of man.[1] "O Truth, my God," exclaims the simple-hearted author, "make me one with Thee in everlasting love. I am wearied with often reading and hearing many things; in Thee is all that I will or desire. Let all teachers hold their peace; let all creatures be silent in Thy sight: speak Thou alone to me!"[2] Such is the spirit in which this book is written. Faith before reason, love before understanding, good life before fine words: these are the mottoes in which it everywhere abounds, and on which it not unfrequently is profound, mystical, and eloquent.

Section IX.—Miracle-Plays and Moralities.

Somewhat earlier than the time of appearance of this work, the influence of the Holy Scriptures became manifest in the mysteries or miracle-plays and moralities that were popular throughout Christendom. They consisted of some mystery or parable of Scripture dramatized for the purpose of instructing the people in a pleasing manner, and initiating them into the spirit of the festivals which the Church celebrated. Few among them could read and study the explanations of the festivals, but all could take in and appreciate what was placed before their eyes. Hence the popularity of these plays. They are the originals of the modern drama. It is the common history of all dra-

[1] Bk. I., ch. i.

[2] Bk. I., ch. iii.

matic poetry. "A tragedy was a religious festival,"[1] says Villemain, speaking of Grecian literature. "The English drama," says Richard Grant White, "like the Greek, has a purely religious origin."[2] And Lorinzer says: "Dramatic poetry, in its source, was above all, religious poetry."[3] The Crusades helped to render these plays popular. "Those who returned from the Holy Land," says Disraeli, "or other consecrated places, composed canticles of their travels, and amused their religious fancies by interweaving scenes of which Christ, the Apostles, and other objects of devotion, served as the themes."[4]

The great heart of the people yearned to witness them. Confraternities were formed for their composition and representation, and in the latter the scenic accompaniments were grand and imposing. The student just returned from the university would consider himself honored in seeing his maiden production placed before the public, as in the case of the unfortunate Chrysostom mentioned in *Don Quixote* — that faithful mirror of the age in which it was written: "I had forgotten to tell you," says the shepherd, "how this Chrysostom deceased was a great hand at composing verses, so much so that he made Christmas carols and *Autos* for Corpus Christi, which our young people play; and everybody says that they could not be beaten."[5] And Pellicer says that these

[1] Une tragédie était une fête religeuse."— *Littérature Française*, Leçon XL.

[2] *The Genius of Shakspeare.*

[3] "Die dramatische Poesie in ihrem Ursprung überall eine religiöse war."—*Geistliche Festspiele*, B. I., Vor. s., 43, *et seq.*

[4] *Curiosities of Literature*, II., p. 15. [5] Part I., ch. xii.

sacred dramas were in such general favor "that they were not only enacted in the theatres, but separately before the royal court, and even before the head of the Holy Inquisition."

The mediæval bards who wrote these pieces often "builded better than they knew." There is art in their construction; point, variety, and sentiment in their language; and graceful diction in their expression. Their motives in writing were elevated; their subjects were in themselves grand and inspiring; the occasions for which they wrote were worthy of both; and not unfrequently did they rise to the dignity of both subject and occasion. With the universal popularity of these plays came their abuse, and they were finally discouraged by the Church. They are said to be immoral. Vulgar expressions are to be found in them, especially in the English plays; but their spirit and scope are invariably moral. Vulgarity is not immorality, and our standard of propriety is not that of our forefathers. This is an age of books, and reading has made us so artificial that we are shocked at expressions that passed harmlessly from them. Warton does not find them degrading in tone. He says: "Rude, and even ridiculous as they were, they softened the manners of the people, by diverting the public attention to spectacles in which the mind was concerned, and by creating a regard for other arts than those of bodily strength and savage valor."

Not only were the miracle-plays not immoral, but they never did thrive in an immoral atmosphere; and therefore it is that we find none in the sunny land of Provençe — the land of chivalry, and love, and song,

and also the hot-bed of doctrinal novelties and heresies — the stronghold of the Albigenses, Waldenses, and Huguenots. Not in the soft-flowing verses of the love-sick troubadour, are the great truths of religion sung; but rather in the more hardy tones of the *langue d'Oil* does the sturdy trouvère, from the fulness of his pious Catholic heart, send forth a flow of well-attuned verses and cleverly adjusted dramas, illustrative of the lives of the saints, the spirit of their religion, the ways of their Saviour, and the perfections of their God. These plays are truly, as Onesime LeRoy remarks, "the religious philosophy of our fathers."[1] Their spirit is discernible in the *Divina Commedia*, and they are the inspiration and foundation of the *Paradise Lost*.[2]

SECTION X. — THE RENAISSANCE.

It is customary, with a certain class of writers, to identify the revival of letters with the downfall of

[1] "La philosophie religieuse de nos pères."—*Etudes sur les Mysteres.*

[2] It is well known that Milton began his *Paradise Lost* as a miracle-play.

When the author first approached the subject of Miracle-Plays, he found every avenue in English literature pronouncing them "rude scenic performances," with Hallam; or "rude, gross, and childish," with Richard Grant White; or "rude, and even ridiculous," with Warton. But *à priori* reasons led him to infer that the religion so successful in every other department of art — capable of erecting the Gothic cathedral, of dictating the *Divina Commedia*, of inspiring *Paradise Lost*, and of tracing the *Transfiguration* on the canvas — could not, after working for centuries, have produced such barbarous things as these critics represent. Deeper research has proved his inference to be correct; and it is his earnest hope to be able, at an early day, to vindicate the Miracle-Plays and Moralities at some length.

Constantinople. This is a mistake. "It dates at least from the eleventh century," says Dr. Nevin, "and there is abundance of evidence that the progress made between that and the age of the Reformation was quite as real and important as any that has taken place since."[1] The Church at all times encouraged letters. In the ninth century St. Roswitha writes dramas that show taste and an extensive acquaintance with the ancient classics. And of the tenth century, which is usually designated as the iron age, Meiners says: "In no age, perhaps, did Germany possess more learned and virtuous churchmen of the episcopal order than in the latter half of the tenth and beginning of the eleventh century."[2] The name of Gerbert is enough to redeem the age from the imputation of midnight darkness. As Pope Sylvester II., he was the patron of learning and science, and established chairs of mathematics, astronomy, and geography. With the advance of time, a thirst for learning increased. The lecture-rooms could not contain the throngs that assembled to hear great teachers. Abelard counted his audience by thousands. Albertus Magnus was compelled to lecture in the public square that still bears his name.[3] Students sat in the streets on litters of hay and straw discussing their themes or listening to their masters.[4] They travelled from afar, gave up all the luxuries of home, and turned valets,

[1] *Mercersburg Review* for March, 1857; quoted in Kenrick's *Primacy*.

[2] Quoted in Hallam, *Literature of Europe*, Vol. I., p. 31.

[3] The *Place Maubert*, i. e., *Magni Alberti*.

[4] This is the tradition that accounts for the name of the *Rue de Fouare* in Paris.

that they might acquire an education.[1] Schools for the poor were especially attended to. The Councils of the Church — those landmarks of civilization — from the beginning, decree that every church that has the means, provide a master for the gratuitous instruction of the poor "according to the ancient customs." That of Lateran, in 1180, says that the Church of God, "like a dutiful mother," being bound to provide for the indigent in soul as well as in body, to every church shall be attached a master to instruct the poor gratuitously.[2] Innocent III., in 1215, reiterates the same decree.[3] The study of languages was encouraged. The Council of Vienne, in 1311, decreed that the Hebrew, Arabic and Chaldaic tongues be taught wherever the Roman Court was held,[4] as well as in the universities of Paris, Oxford, Salamanca and Bologna; and that two professorships of each language be established and maintained at the expense of the bishops and the Pope in each of these universities, except that of Paris, the expenses of which the King was to defray. Though such wholesome decrees were not always responded to as cordially as could

[1] The custom was still prevalent at Salamanca in the 18th century.

[2] "Quoniam Ecclesia Dei et in iis quæ spectant ad subsidium corporis, et in iis quæ ad profectum veniunt animarum, indigentibus sicut pia mater providere tenetur: ne pauperibus, qui parentum opibus juvare non possunt, legendi, et proficiendi opportunitas subtrahatur, per unamquamque Ecclesiam cathedralem magistro, qui Clericus ejusdem Ecclesiæ et scholares pauperes gratis doceat, competens aliquod beneficium assignetur, quo docentis necessitas sublevetur, et discentibus via pateat ad doctrinam."—*Concil. Lateran.*, sub. Alex. III., cap. xviii.

[3] *Concil. Lateran.*, sub. Innocent III., cap. ii., *De Magistris Scholasticis.*

[4] It was then held at Avignon. Clement V. was the reigning Pope.

be wished, they still prove that the Church fostered learning in all classes, noble as well as peasant.[1]

The Renaissance, then, is not one of letters. It is of another stamp. The spirit that animated Roscelin and Abelard, that flowed down the ages in undercurrents, and appeared in the Cathari and Paterini, in the Lollards and the Hussites, and perpetuated itself through the channels of secret societies, now rose to the surface, and became the predominant spirit of the age. It is the spirit of rationalism. In the fifteenth century it assumed the shape of enthusiasm for the pagan ideal. Petrarch (1304–1374) had thrown the whole vigor of his poetic soul into the study and diffusion of Latin and Greek letters. Men without his genius imbibed his enthusiasm for literature, and grew blind in their admiration not only for the authors of Greece and Rome, but even for every non-Christian writer. Petrarch tells us that they did not think that they had done anything for philosophy, unless they had barked at Christ and the supernaturalness of His doctrine. Averroës they placed above the Fathers and Apostles. Thus one of Petrarch's friends says to him on occasion of his having quoted St. Paul: "You still hold to your Christian religion; I don't believe a word of it. Your Paul, your Augustine, and all those you so extol, were great babblers; and could you only bear the reading of Averroës, you would soon perceive how much superior he is to those jesters of yours."[2]

[1] That expression said to be found on mediæval documents — "This one being a nobleman, attests his inability to sign his name," — is a fiction.

[2] "Egli [Petrarca] se ne duole spesso nelle sue opere, e fra l'altre

Later, the Humanists are intoxicated with Plato. Marsilius Ficino is said to have addressed the people: "Beloved in Plato." His name is sweeter to their ear than that of the Saviour. His writings were cherished more than the Gospel. They imagined that they had found the whole scheme of Christianity in his pages. Upon the fall of Constantinople (1453), the presence of Greek scholars among them added more fuel to their enthusiasm. Their academies fostered an anti-christian spirit, and yearned for pagan freedom; and some of them were known to have revived the worship of Madre Natura. Their language was considered elegant only in proportion as it was enveloped in mythological allusions. The epoch was a partial reversion to the nature-worship and love of the sensuous, always characteristic of the Aryan race. All this effort to revive a by-gone spirit caused literary men to lose the real spirit of their own times, and the cold literalness of their imitation was destructive of native genius. The religious influence that for ten centuries had been gradually gaining ground began to be weakened, reason began to revolt against faith,

cose racconta ciò che gli avenne in Venizia (*Senil.*, L. 5, ep. 3) quando venuto a trovarlo nella sua biblioteca un di coloro i quali, com' egli dice, *secondo il costume de' moderni filosofi pensano di non aver fatto nulla, se non abbaiano contro di Cristo e della sovrumana di lui dottrina*, costui prese a deriderlo e ad insultarlo, perche nel parlare avea usato di qualche detto dell' Apostolo Paolo; *Tientu pure*, disse egli al Petrarca, *la tua Religione cristiana: nulla de tutto ciò io credo. Il tuo Paolo, il tuo Agostino e tutti coloro che tanto esalti, furone uomini loquacissimi. Così potessi tu sostenere la lettura di Averroe, tu ben vedresti quanto egli sia maggiore di cotesti tuoi gioccoliere.*" — TIRABOSCHI, *Storia della Letteratura Italiana*, Lib. Secondo, Vol. V., p. 282–3.

though both, proceeding from the same divine Author, are not, and cannot be contradictory; and the harmony that was being consummated between the secular and clerical elements of society was changed to discord.

That is the more perfect society which is best in accordance with the nature of things. In the mind of their divine Author, faith is intrinsically superior to reason, grace to nature, the supernatural to the natural. The society in which this order obtains is the one best in accordance with the nature of things, and is therefore the more perfect. Now this is what society was coming to in the Middle Ages, and the checking of this tendency, the estrangement of the two orders, the natural and the supernatural, and the initiation of a revolt of one against the other, are among the most baneful effects of the Renaissance. It turned the destiny of society from its natural course. It induced universal indifferentism — indifferentism influenced by a spirit of rapacity in England, by a spirit of cupidity and immorality in Germany, and by a spirit of philosophical speculation in Italy. In their hearts' core, the literary men of Italy were Catholic; their indifferentism was affected, because it was the fashion; but it blinded them to the real dangers of the age. They trifled when they should have been serious.

Such was the state of affairs among the literary circles of Italy, when there came among them a young monk from Germany, simple and unsophisticated, and though lacking discrimination, still possessed of quick perception. He enters Rome, and is

astonished at the enthusiasm with which fragments of an antique statue are triumphantly paraded through the streets; he is horrified at the pæans that are sung upon their discovery. He comes in contact with some of the literary men; he hears them converse; their language is almost unintelligible to him — it is the language of pagan Rome. He is shocked at the familiarity with which holy things are treated; he finally wonders if he is not in dreamland, carried far back on the stream of time to the days of Augustus, surrounded by just enough of Christianity to give the dream more the appearance of reality. Young Luther returns to his native land, and broods over the words he heard and the scenes he witnessed, until a chain of circumstances places him in position to make use of his recollections; and, entrenching himself in faith alone as the key to salvation, by the fire of his eloquence he sets aglow the mass of corruption and dissatisfaction he found in Germany. Luther was the most remarkable man of his age. He was the chief instrument of circumstances in the religious movement then afoot. He made a deep impression upon letters. His translation of the Scriptures did as much for the formation of style in German literature, as did King James's version for English letters. But what influence did the Reformation have upon letters?

CHAPTER VIII.

LITERATURE AND THE REFORMATION.

THE sixteenth century was a transition period. Men's minds were in fermentation on all subjects. The aspects of society were changing. The Crusades were past, and the Crusaders had brought with them from the East many an intellectual novelty. The press had been invented, and reading-matter was disseminated more freely among the people. The New World had been discovered, and every day accounts were coming from it that exceeded the brightest dreams of wonder-land. Monks had grown a nuisance, and lay an incubus on society. Instead of being "the salt of the earth," as it was their true mission to be, they were by their scandalous lives the corrupters of men. The clergy loved their own ease too well; they were too great pleasure-seekers and gold-covetors to attend to their flocks with that pastoral spirit of simplicity and good faith that is to be witnessed in the Church to-day. The bishops were no better. They looked for emoluments and court favor. Even the better class of ecclesiastics gave themselves up to the intellectual luxury of admiring Plato and imitating Cicero. All this fostered the spirit of rationalism; and Luther, when most vehemently throwing himself behind the ramparts of faith alone and the Bible, was a rationalist so long as he un-

dertook to take revelation apart, to examine it piecemeal, and to accept and reject at will whatever suited him. Revelation must be taken in its entirety, or rejected altogether. Human reason cannot logically constitute itself judge of the supernatural. In doing so, it is no longer calm reason; it is blind rationalism; it is reason intoxicated. And such in its effect is the principle of private judgment that was at the foundation of the new religion. Blacksmiths left their anvils, and shoemakers their lasts, to preach the new inspiration they had received. For the first time in the world's history was the spectacle presented of a religion without an altar, a self-constituted priesthood, and a faith in mystery subjected to reason. This is the philosophy of the Reformation. It is the religious current of rationalism.

Now, the spirit of rationalism invariably tends to break away from the moorings of tradition, from all that goes to make up the past glory of a people, and dwells alone in the self-sufficiency of its own cold reasonings. It can destroy, but it never builds up; it can teach man his rights, but it forgets his duties; it can dethrone one ruler, only to set up a thousand despotisms in his stead. It feeds principally on dreams and abstractions, and is the sport of imagination, even when loudest in its appeal to reason; it is crossed in the world of reality, and frustrated in its designs; for man, being a creature of education, cannot forget in a day what he has spent centuries in learning. It contemns, ignores, desecrates the old, and pays homage to the new. A spirit possessed of these characteristics is unable to inspire a literary

master-piece. Recall the eighteenth century. It is the embodiment of philosophical and political rationalism. It has given us the materialism of Locke and Abbé Condillac, and the giant efforts of the cyclopædists; but in all that the century has of its own, we perceive nothing favorable to literature. The master genius of the age writes tragedy; but it is noteworthy that he forgets his hostility to Christianity, and once more resumes the chain of traditions; it is no longer Voltaire the sophist; it is the docile child of humanity, repeating in his own way the language that humanity has known from the beginning.

Thus considering the historical significancy of the Reformation as the religious current of rationalism, we would be led to conclude summarily that it is composed of elements better suited to the retarding of society than to its advancement. But thought has been developed since the sixteenth century. Let us not commit ourselves to the sophism, *post hoc, ergo propter hoc.* Let us examine the Reformation in its nature, in its relations, and in its results, and see if it possesses any new element capable of fostering letters and intellectual development.

1. The Reformation in its nature was not favorable to literature. It added no new idea to thought. It asserted no positive doctrine that had not been previously professed. It simply denied certain parts that had as much authority for their belief as those it retained. But negation is not productive. It ends in nihilism.

2. The Reformation in its relations is unfavorable to letters. By the illogical habits of mind it begets,

it is ruinous to thought. For example, it bases belief on the Scripture alone, and professes to throw tradition overboard; still it knows only by tradition that the book it reveres is genuine. Again, it is cut up into a vast number of sects, each of which chips off from revelation whatever suits its purpose. One believes in the Trinity, another rejects it as an absurdity. Yet both call themselves a part of Christianity, and each believes it is the same Christianity that both denies the Trinity and accepts it at the same time. Each individual member may not assert as much to himself; but practically his intelligence lives in this contradiction. He accepts and rejects with the same breath.[1]

The numerous controversies to which the Reformation gave rise were not favorable to letters. They absorbed the intellectual energies of the sixteenth and of the greater part of the seventeenth centuries. Controversial works are one-sided; and a one-sided book, no matter with what ability it is written, does not appeal to our common humanity. It is not a general classic. Its life, with rare exceptions, is ephemeral. It passes away with the occasion that gave it birth.

[1] As an instance of this illogicity of mind, we would call attention to a figure that was very popular at the late Evangelical Alliance held in New York. It is that of likening the various sects of Protestantism to the primitive colors of white light after it has passed through the prism. It is a pretty figure, but a splendid sophism. There is no contradiction in the colors of the rainbow. Their relations are expressed by the different degrees of intensity with which waves of light reach the eye. They are of the same kind, whereas contradictories are different in nature, and can never agree. Their reconciliation would involve their annihilation.

3. The Reformation in its results has been unfavorable to literature. Its immediate effect was to destroy the literary spirit. Erasmus said that wherever it prevailed, letters went to ruin.[1] Hallam remarks that "the first effects of the great religious schism in Germany were not favorable to classical literature."[2] Minds of intelligence were too busy in getting up the arguments in favor of the religious tenets they adopted, to think of cultivating poetry, or philosophy, or history, or the dignified eloquence that becomes a classic standard. But it is said that Protestantism did good afterwards; especially that it caused the Elizabethan era of letters, and emancipated the human intellect. Let us consider each of these statements.

In name and to all appearance the Elizabethan era was Protestant. But the new religion sat on the people's consciences an ill-fitting garment, and the old religion they still cherished in their hearts. Indeed, they scarcely knew that they had changed their religious belief. Ignorant as they then were — they must have been nearly as ignorant as they are to-day, and there is no more benighted people in Christendom than the lower class in England[3] — they could have scarcely been able to realize the difference. They knew not the full bearing and significancy of the changes made in the external ceremonies; they said the same prayers then that they had been saying from their childhood; their *Book of Common Prayer* was

[1] Ubicunque regnat Lutheranismus, ibi literarum est interitus.

[2] *Literature of Europe*, Vol. I., p. 339.

[3] See *London Labor and London Poor*, by Mr. Henry Mayhew; also, Father Thebaud's *Irish Race*, pp. 470–474.

merely a modified translation of the Roman Missal. The only fact they realized was that they had to pay no more "Peter's pence" to support a power about which they knew little and cared less; and that they considered a gain. Whatever training the learned and great of those times had, it was the same that their ancestors had been receiving. And though the new spirit of rationalism had pervaded nearly every branch of letters, still the tone of poetry remained intact, and the Shakspearean drama is pre-eminently Catholic in its grandest and purest passages. Compare the Elizabethan poets with those of the golden era of Spain. They are contemporaries; they are also identical in spirit, though one lives within sight of the *auto-da-fé*, and the other basks in the smiles of a queen who hates and persecutes Catholics. Their peculiarities may all be accounted for by difference of country and individual idiosyncrasy.[1]

It is ~~further~~ alleged that the Reformation created an enlightened Christianity, and emancipated the human intellect. It has been seen in what the nature of that enlightenment consists, and how a medley of contradictions has in consequence been saddled on the mind. The word "emancipation" is a misnomer for that undue preponderance given to reason, and that love of speculation characteristic of the whole Aryan race, but especially persistent in the Teutonic and Scandinavian families, developed to the extreme under rationalistic influence. The preponderance is

[1] See A. W. von Schlegel's *Lectures on Dramatic Poetry;* the Lectures treating of Shakspeare and Calderon.

undue, because man in acquiring knowledge has need of more than reason alone; the instinct of faith is equally strong within him, and he who lays most stress on the supremacy of reason, when he comes to analyze his opinions, will find that he too is only repeating—that he is an unconscious disciple. Now, taking emancipation of the intellect for what it is worth in its literal sense, it is apparent that the throwing off of all restraint is not good for the intelligence. It impedes the development of thought. Without wholesome restraint, the mind wanders; it has no starting-point, no goal; it gropes along like a blind man, and takes hold of the first idea it meets; it rejoices in what it considers a grand discovery, and puts out as new what every passer-by has already perceived and taken as a matter of course. Its normal condition is scepticism. Is not this in a nutshell the history of liberal thought since the Reformation? Look at the world-authors since then, and examine what is fundamental in their writings. We will begin with those who come in more immediate contact with the spirit afloat.

There is Montaigne. He is professedly a Catholic. But so great is the confusion of ideas in the sixteenth century, a man's outward profession may be one thing, and the life-giving principle of his writings may be entirely the opposite. For that reason no stress is to be laid on the religious profession of an author. It proves nothing. He is the child and spokesman of his age; when not of its predominant spirit, of the reactionary spirit it necessarily induces. What then is the spirit that pervades the *Essais?* On every page

of this sincere book — *ce livre de bonne foy* — there is clearly stamped a total absence of conviction. One of his most characteristic essays is that in which he goes to show that everybody ought to be familiar with the thought of death. He rightly considers it the supreme act of life. The day of our death he calls "the master-day; it is the day that judges all others."[1] He calls that a beastly indifference — *cette nonchalance bestiale*—that refuses to think of it. Now, the outcome of all this solicitude is that he would like death to find him in a mood indifferent to his coming, and while planting cabbage.[2] It is thus he trifles with subjects of the greatest moment. He is a complete sceptic. "The essence of his opinion," says Pascal, "consists of that doubt that doubts of itself, and of that ignorance that ignores itself."[3] In all this there is no progress. No idea is made to germinate and bring forth fruit that might be considered a boon to humanity. All that fund of knowledge, that power of expression, and that richness of illustration that abound in the *Essais*, are stricken with barrenness under the chilling influence of scepticism.

There is Rabelais. The Curé of Meudon is also a

[1] "C'est le maistre iour; c'est le iour iuge de tous les aultres; c'est le iour, dict un ancien, qui doibt iuger de toutes mes anneés passeés." —*Livre* I., ch. xviii.

[2] Ie veux . . . . que la mort me trouve plantant mes choulx, mais nonchalant d'elle, et encores plus de mon iardin imparfaict. — L. I., ch. xix.

[3] "C'est dans ce doute qui doute de soi, et dans cette ignorance qui s'ignore, que consiste l'essence de son opinion." — *Pensées*, Vol. I., p. 278.

child of the rationalistic spirit that gave birth to the Reformation. His works breathe the same atmosphere of scepticism. He ridicules everything sacred. All authority — be it king or cardinal, priest or magistrate — is torn to tatters in his inimitable romance. The only law it inculcates is: Do what you like — *Fay ce que vouldras.*[1] If Montaigne trifled with grave subjects, Rabelais jested at them. He laughed away seriousness; he laughed away responsibility; he laughed away thought; he laughed away all man's better emotions; he even for a while laughed Protestantism out of France. Jest is sometimes wholesome; but not such jest. Its licentiousness too often shocks. It is too frequently out of place. It is grim as the laugh of a death-head. Rabelais supplied a powerful lever with which to move the foundations of society. He should have procured the wherewith to clear away the rubbish that had been accumulating for centuries. He did shake down the cobwebs, but it was by making the whole edifice totter.

There is Descartes, the Luther of philosophy. He declared war upon Aristotle and the scholastics; he divorced theology from philosophy, and thus opened the door to many of the philosophic vagaries now agitating the world of thought. He took a part of philosophy for the whole; for the supernatural order

[1] "Toute leur vie estoit employée, non par loix, statutz ou reigles, mais selon leur vouloir et franc arbitre, se leuoyent du lict quand bon leur sembloit; beuvoyent, mangeoyent, traualloyent, dormoyent, quand le desir leur venoit. Nul ne les esueilloit, nul ne les parforceoit ny à boyre, ny à manger, ny à faire chose aultre quelconcque. Ainsi l'avoit estably Gargantua. En leur reigle n'estoit que ceste clause: FAY CE QUE VOULDRAS."—*Gargantua*, Liv. I., ch. 57.

is a living fact, and in every sound philosophy must be taken into consideration as an essential factor in the production of thought, the progress of life, and the march of society. His fundamental principle, *Cogito, ergo sum*, gives him his own identity, and nothing more. Hence, his proof of the existence of God is defective. He knows that God is, from the idea of perfection in his mind; but how knows he that the idea conforms to the object? His methodical doubt excludes all knowing of it. Thus, the spirit of rationalism would lead him one way, while his faith directed him to an opposite result. Fichte is Descartes reduced to logical consistency.[1]

These men were rationalistic, and yet they were not children of the Reformation. It is because the rationalistic spirit pervades all classes of intelligence and checks thought. Great minds beneath its influence feel the ground of certainty move from under their feet; and whether they abandon themselves to the current, as did Montaigne and Rabelais, or with Descartes attempt to direct its course, they are borne along with it, and their writings give testimony to its universal sway. Let us take, as representative authors of each of the three succeeding centuries, men who all of them lived and died in a Protestant atmosphere: Leibnitz, the philosopher, of the seventeenth;

[1] Our strictures on Descartes may sound ill on the ears of his numerous admirers. We have yet to get as impatient of him as did Pascal: "Je ne puis pardonner à Descartes: il avoit bien voulu, dans tout sa philosophie, pouvoir se passer de Dieu; mais il n'a pu s'empêcher de lui faire donner une chequenaude pour mettre le monde en mouvement; après cela il n'a plus que faire de Dieu."—*Pensées, Ire Partie*, Art. X.

Burke, the statesman, of the eighteenth, and Goethe, the poet, of the nineteenth century — intellectual Samsons of their times, who wielded in their respective departments vast and permanent influence. Is not the secret of their strength due to the religious influence of the spirit they were inhaling in every breath, and which pervaded their thoughts and gave color to their views? It is perceptible in their manner of writing; it crops out in many a phrase; it is inwoven in their thoughts; but of all that is permanent and influencing in their works, not a jot or tittle is traceable to the rationalistic spirit that they inhaled.

In Leibnitz, there are two men — the Leibnitz who entered into controversy with Bossuet, and the Leibnitz who wrote the *Systema Theologicum;* and they are almost opposites. Which is the genuine Leibnitz? In his controversy he was acting a part; he was the spokesman of Protestantism; they were not his own objections he was raising, so much as those of his party. His inner soul — the real agitations of his great intellect — are not revealed under such circumstances; they are rather to be looked for in the secret communings of his understanding — in the unbosoming of himself to himself — and therefore in the *Systema.* There he leaves aside all prejudice, as far as it is possible for men to do so; and, having invoked the Divine assistance, he listens to the teachings of the sacred Scriptures, venerable antiquity, sound reason, and well-authenticated facts, and draws his conclusions independently of any recived system.[1]

[1] The beautiful sentence with which the work opens bears upon its

In that independent investigation, carried on as though he were a neophyte coming from another world, and addicted to none of the prevailing systems, he produced the *Summa* of St. Thomas in epitome. His deepest convictions went with the old Church. And his private correspondence shows that his heart also was with her; for he wrote to Madame de Boinon in July, 1691: "You are right in believing me to be a Catholic at heart. I am so even openly; for it is only obstinacy that makes a heretic, and of that, thank God, my conscience does not accuse me."[1] Again, the spirit that animates his philosophy is the same that inspired the genius of St. Thomas, and dictated the scholastic philosophy of which he always spoke in terms of praise.[2] "It is very remarkable," says Balmes, speaking of the coincidence between his views and those of St. Thomas on pantheism, "that under a historical as well as a metaphysical aspect, Leibnitz agrees

face the candor with which the investigation was begun: "Cum diu multumque invocato divino auxilio, depositisque, quantum forte hominum possibile, est, partium studiis perinde ac si ex novo orbe Neophytus nulli adhuc addictus venirem, controversias de religione versaverim, haec tandem mecum ipse statui, atque expensis omnibus sequenda putavi, quæ et scriptura sacra et pia antiquitas et ipsa recta ratio et rerum gestarum fides, homini affectuum vacuo commendare videntur."

[1] This striking passage is found in Lorenz Doller's introduction to the German-Latin edition (Mainz, 1825). He quotes it from *Oeuvres de Bossuet*, XXVI., p. 141. The passage in the German runs thus: "Sie haben Recht, wenn sie glauben, ich sey im *Herzen* ein Katholik. Ich bin es ja sogar öffentlich. Denn es ist ja nur die Hartnäckigkeit welche den Ketzer macht, und darüber klagt mich, Gott sei es gedankt, mein Gewissen nicht an."—*Vorrede.*, p. 66.

[2] A frequent expression of his was: "Aurum latere in stercore illo scholastico barbarei."—*Lettre Qieme à Remond de Montmort.*

with St. Thomas; both express the same idea in very similar words."[1] Nowhere in his writings do we find a profound truth evoked, even by his genius, from the cold negations of rationalism, religious or philosophic. On the contrary, their historical significancy is that they are reactionary against that spirit; and therefore is he in truth a child of scholasticism.

The genius of the great modern statesman kept equally intact from the political rationalism of his age. It is a matter of historical evidence that the great conservative statesmen of Europe since the days of Edmund Burke—De Maistre, De Bonald, Goerres, Schlegel — have made the deep philosophical vein of thought underlying his luxuriant eloquence their careful study. And that school is pre-eminently Catholic. Take his master-piece, *Thoughts on the French Revolution.* The principles running through it — those principles that are the secret of his political far-sightedness, in consequence of which he saw a measure in all its bearings, and grasped its ultimate result long before his contemporary statesmen had mastered its first elements—are the very opposite of those dictated by the spirit of rationalism. That spirit cried liberty. Edmund Burke asks: "Is it because liberty in the abstract may be classed among the blessings of mankind, that I am seriously to felicitate a madman, who has escaped from the protecting restraint and wholesome darkness of his cell, on his restoration to the enjoyment of light and liberty?" It would destroy religion. Edmund Burke says: "We know, and what is better, we feel inwardly that religion is the basis of civil society, and the source of all good and of all

[1] *Fund. Phil.*, Bk. I., Note to ch. x.

comfort." It tore away the constitution of France. He calls it not a noble effort of genius, a triumph of humanity, and the like; he rather considers it the result of sloth, inability to wrestle with difficulties, and a degenerate fondness for tricking short-cuts. "It is this inability to wrestle with difficulty which has obliged the arbitrary assembly of France to commence their schemes of reform with abolition and total destruction. . . . . Your mob can do this as well as your assemblies. The shallowest understanding, the rudest hand, is more than enough to the task."[1] He stemmed the current manfully, and broke its powerful waves on the shores of England. His life was a warfare against it. If Liebnitz reacted against the religious and philosophical rationalism of the seventeenth century, he reacted against the political rationalism of the eighteenth.

The poet of the century — of its partial return to naturalism, of its scepticism, of its sentimentalism — owes nothing to the Reformation. He held aloof from all creeds.[2] He was a modern pagan. His life was a splendid bubble; it lacked seriousness, and was the realization of nothing more than self. But all that is positive in his poetry is drawn from the same source from which poets have drunk from the beginning. The relations of the real and the ideal, the warring of intellect and heart, human aspirations and natural love—such are the themes of this magnificent,

[1] Works, Vol. I., p. 531.

[2] "Was mich nämlich von der Brüdergemeine so wie von andern werthen Christenseelen absonderte, war dasselbige, vorüber die Kirche schon mehr als einmal in Spaltung gerathen war." — *Aus Meinem Leben*, 3r Th., 15es Buch.

many-sided dreamer. In it all the Reformation has no say. It is the working of human nature, though, as treated by Goethe, of corrupt human nature. Would that he were less thoroughly unchristian!

There is an element of modern thought which the Reformation has been instrumental in producing. It is a spirit of Biblical criticism — that irreverent, self-destructive criticism that animated the Neo-Platonists, and that in our own day has inspired Renan and Strauss. When Luther criticised the simple words in which the evangelist records the angel's salutation to Mary, he sowed the seed that has germinated into the *Vie de Jesus* and the *Alte und der Neue Glaube*, the fruits of which are a cosmic sentiment that would substitute music and poetry for prayer and the sacred Scriptures.

There now remains for us but to draw the inevitable conclusion. It is that the Reformation has not only been unfavorable to intellectual development in its nature and relations, but that results go to show that this intellectual development has gone on, that world-authors have written and impressed succeeding times, in spite of its principles, which are rationalistic, negative—no principles at all—the destruction of thought and logic where they obtain; and, finally, that all that is genuine and lasting in their writings is either reversionary or reactionary.[1]

[1] We deem it necessary to apologize for having dwelt so long on the Reformation. It is now a dead issue. But so many writers on general literature have fallen into the sophism, *post hoc, ergo propter hoc*, and attributed to the Reformation results that belong not to it in the remotest degree, we thought it well to lay stress on its character and place in the history of thought. We have said nothing stronger of it than have its greatest champions. Guizot says: "The religious

CHAPTER IX.

LORD BACON AND MODERN THOUGHT.

RATIONALISM took its legitimate course when it applied itself to the development and application of the material energies of nature; for it must be borne in mind that reason is good, the conveniences of life are good, and the physical sciences are good, and between them and religion there is no contradiction. It is only when scientific men leave their proper sphere, and begin to speculate on things they have no mental aptitude for, that in their ignorance they clash with truth and religion. When Lalande sweeps the heavens with his telescope, and catalogues the stars, he is doing a service to science; but when he tells us that he has not found God at the end of his telescope, he is introducing an idea foreign to his subject, and answering a question it is not within the province of astronomy to put him.

Scholasticism was so mingled up with the old religion, that the nations that drifted from the one despised the other, yearned after a change in intellectual

revolution of the sixteenth century did not understand the true principles of intellectual liberty; it liberated the human mind, and yet pretended to govern it by law." "The right of examining what we ought to believe," says Madame de Stael, "is the foundation of Protestantism. The first reformers did not think so; they thought themselves able to place the pillars of Hercules of the mind according to their own lights; but they were mistaken in hoping to make those who had rejected all authority of this kind in the Catholic religion submit to their decisions as infallible."

pursuits, and hailed every philosophical innovator. Wearied with verbal strife, and disgusted at seeing the same questions still open after centuries of dispute, men sought repose in the more fruitful work of mechanical pursuits and scientific investigation. Francis Bacon became the exponent and representative of this phase of thought. His unquestionable genius and his elevated social position gave weight to his words, and he was hailed as the apostle of the inductive method. That method he made the one idea of his genius.

Bacon is misunderstood by two classes of men. One regards him as the creator of a new and previously unknown method, to which modern science is indebted for all its triumphs. This is an impossibility. He could not change the intellect. He could not give man another faculty distinct from those he already possessed. Intelligence works now exactly as it worked prior to my Lord Bacon. The sum and substance of his philosophy is this: "Leave scholastic disputations. You have talked enough over words. Turn to things. Interpret nature. Experiment. Be careful of the biases of your mind. Be not overhasty in your inferences. Look to facts. Wait. Read the lessons of nature as it is, and not as you think it ought to be." This simple piece of advice constitutes his title to immortality and our gratitude. And though it is a good one, there is nothing in it that had not at all times occurred to the careful man in the experiences of his every-day life. Bacon added no real truth to any of the sciences. He enforced his views generally by the crudest facts and by childish

illustrations. He invented no new method. He only called attention to that which men should follow in investigating the laws of nature.

The other class denounces him as the ruin of all genuine thought, the bitter enemy of metaphysics, and the father of modern materialism. This view of him is equally incorrect. He was an innovator; and all innovators are so absorbed in the idea they would enforce, that they are invariably led to exaggerate its importance, and to belittle that which they would have it supplant. So it was with Aristotle; so it was with Descartes; so it was with Lord Bacon. He claimed for his method that it was intrinsically different from the syllogism. Here, in his eagerness to assert its superiority, he took a part for the whole. The observation and grouping of facts do not constitute a syllogism; but neither do they give anything more general than facts; and with these alone the mind can never attain to the knowledge of a general law. It is impossible to set aside the rule of logic that the terms of the conclusion ought never be taken with greater extension than in the premises. No number of particulars make up a universal. Induction, then, only gives the material for one premise; and when, from a certain number of particular facts, a general law is inferred, there is implied in the back-ground a universal truth that is a necessary factor, not in making the induction, but in deducing the law. In this manner alone is the inductive method legitimate.[1]

In discussing the philosophy of Bacon, it is well to bear in mind that we possess only a fragment of it,

[1] "At si rite perpenditur, inductio a syllogismo essentialiter non discrepat, sed forma tantum."—*Liberatore, Inst. Phil.*, p. 67.

and that this fragment has reference principally to physical science. It is therefore one-sided in its development, which, exclusively considered, is materialistic. But Bacon has not abused the metaphysics, nor is he their bitter enemy. On the contrary, he thinks them good in their place. He thinks that they give unity to the other sciences. He even censures them for accepting, unchallenged, scientific principles on the testimony of each individual science. He considers it within the province of metaphysics to test the foundations of all knowledge in the light of the principles they establish.[1] And he is right. He censures the syllogysm, but it is with his eye on the physical sciences. Thus, when he tells us that "the syllogism is not applied to the principles of the sciences, and is of no avail in intermediate axioms as being far from equal to the subtility of nature," and adds, that "it forces assent, therefore, and not things,"[2] he says what is at least in part true; for first principles are not deduced, and no amount of exclusive syllogizing can discover a law of nature. Here his favorite method of observation and experiment is required. It has been as well as truly said of logic, that "its chain of conclusions hangs loose at both ends; both the point from which the proof should start, and the points at which it should arrive, are beyond its reach; it comes short both of first principles and of concrete issues."[3]

[1] *De Augmentis*, Lib. III.

[2] Syllogismus ad principia scientiarum non adhibetur, ad media axiomata frustra adhibetur, cum sit subtilitate naturæ longe impar. Assensum itaque constringit, non res."—*Novum Organum*, Aph. XIII.

[3] John Henry Newman, *Grammar of Assent*, p. 272. See also pp. 255, *et seq.*

The inductive method, as elaborated by Bacon, is impracticable. "Hitherto," he says, "the proceeding has been to fly at once from the sense and particulars up to the most general propositions, as certain fixed poles for the argument to turn upon, and from these to derive the rest by middle terms."[1] He is correct in censuring too hasty a transition from facts to principles. It misleads the mind, and becomes the source of numerous errors. Men are to-day as incautious as ever. It is not uncommon to see them on a single fact build up a whole theory — men, too, who plume themselves on being disciples of the inductive philosopher. Now, what is the method Bacon would substitute? To set out also with sense and the particular facts, but without skipping any chain, and, by multiplying observations and experiences, to arrive but at the last place at the most general propositions.[2] But there is no last place in the observation of facts. They multiply with the discerning power of the observer. Nature is a book so extensive, so difficult to read, and, withal, so precisely written, that the little compass of a man's life — the combined efforts of an age — can accurately decipher but few of her phenomena. Accordingly, the true Baconian is the Positivist who looks only to facts, and studies "the laws of phenomenon, and never the mode of production."[3] The greatest triumphs of intelligence have been, and will continue to be, made by anticipation. Still, Bacon

[1] "Adhuc enim res ita geri consuevit; ut a sensu et particularibus primo loco ad maxime generalia advoletur, tanquam ad polos fixos circa quos disputationes vertantur; ab illis cætera per media deriventur."—*Distributio Opus.*, Vol. I., E. & S. Ed., London, p. 136.

[2] *Nov. Org.*, 19–22–26.

[3] Comte.

could not insist too strongly on patient investigation —on the mind's carrying lead rather than wings.

It is often asserted that Bacon flouted final causes altogether from the domain of knowledge as of atheistical tendency. He is far from any such act. He has even taken the pains to state expressly of their consideration: "Neither does this call in question or derogate from divine Providence, but rather highly confirms and exalts it."[1] He would relegate final causes from physics to metaphysics; for to the latter they more properly belong. He is correct. Design alone is a most fallacious guide in studying the laws of nature. He explains himself in the same place: "For the handling of final causes in physics, has driven away and overthrown the diligent inquiry of physical causes, and made man acquiesce in those specious and shadowy causes, without actively pressing the inquiry of those which are really and truly physical, to the great arrest and prejudice of science."[2] He is not to be blamed for this treatment of final causes. It is the merit of his genius that he thus assigned to them their proper sphere; and in doing so he removed the greatest obstacle in the way of the advancement of the physical sciences.

Bacon's views were those of his age. The necessity of scientific reform was felt throughout the learned

[1] "Neque vero ista res in dubium vocat Providentiam Divinam, aut ei quicquam derogat, sed potius eandem miris modis confirmat et evehit."—*De Aug.*, Lib. III., cap. iv.

[2] "Tractatio enim *Causarum Finalium* in *Physicis* inquisitionem Causarum *Physicarum* expulit et dejecit; effecitque ut homines in istiusmodi speciosis et umbratilibus causis acquiescerunt, nec inquisitionem causarum realium, et vere Physicarum strenue urgerent; ingenti scientiarum detrimento."—*De Aug.*, Lib. III.

world. Descartes felt it, and endeavored to bring about in mathematics and metaphysics the reform Bacon sought to achieve in the domain of physics. They both gave direction to the movement. But they did not create it; they could not have impelled it a step, if it did not march of its own accord. Had they attempted to stop its progress, great as were their geniuses, it would have crushed them into oblivion.

Three centuries and a half before Francis Bacon wrote, there lived a monk who attempted to achieve in science exactly what was achieved in the sixteenth century, but who failed because the mental soil of his age was not prepared for his opinions. He was an innovator, but an untimely one, and public opinion scarcely noticed him at first, for it understood not his language. He would abuse its lack of comprehension, and loudly assert his views as the only correct ones, and public opinion thereupon turned on the outspoken Franciscan, and persecuted him as a babbler that knew not whereof he spoke. Therefore it is that, though deeply learned in the sciences,[1] Roger Bacon made little or no impress on his age. In nearly every point of his method, the monk has anticipated the chancellor.

Both approach their subject with the same spirit. Both get impatient with the disputes of the school-

[1] L'admirable, moine Roger Bacon, dont la plupart des savants actuels, si de daigneux du moyen âge, seraient assurément incapables, je ne dis point d'écrire, mais seulement de lire la grande composition a cause de l'immense variété des vues qui s'y trouvent sur tous les divers ordres de phénomènes.—COMTE, *Phil. Pos.*, Tome VI., p. 206.

men. Francis Bacon complains of their barrenness. He says it is no longer subject developed after subject; it is school pitted against school.[1] Roger Bacon is equally loud in his complaints. He finds the books of the ancients full of doubts, obscurities, and perplexities. He finds his contemporaries, with few exceptions, not a whit better. Few of them really understand the Aristotle they laud so highly.[2]

II.

They are both equally penetrated with a sense of humility before the grandeur of nature and the little they really know of her mysteries.

FRANCIS BACON.	ROGER BACON.
It is most certain, and proved by experience, that a little philosophy can lead to atheism; but much knowledge brings back to religion.	He is mad who thinks highly of his wisdom; he most mad who exhibits it as something to be wondered at.

TEXT.

Certissimum est, atque experientia comprobatum, leves gustus in philosophia movere fortasse ad atheismum, sed pleniores haustus ad religionem reducere.—*Nov. Org.*, Lib. I.	Infanus est qui de sapientia se extollit, et maxime infanit qui ostentat et tanquam portentum suam scientiam nititur divulgare.— *Op. Maj.*, Lib. I., p. 15, Ed. Jebb.

III.

Both of them mention the same number of obstacles in the way of acquiring true knowledge.

[1] Dist. Op.

[2] *Opus Majus*, Ed. Jebb, p. 10, *et seq.*

FRANCIS BACON.

Four species of idols beset the human mind. The first kind we will call idols of the tribe; the second, idols of the cave; the third, idols of the market-place; and the fourth, idols of the theatre.

ROGER BACON.

There are four great stumbling-blocks in the way of comprehending truth, which impede all wisdom whatever; and with difficulty do they permit anybody to arrive at the true title of being wise. They are: the force of weak and unworthy authority, prolonged custom, popular opinion, and the hiding of one's ignorance with a semblance of wisdom.

TEXT.

Quatuor sunt genera Idolorum quæ mentes humanas obsident. Iis (docendi gratia) nomina imposuimus; ut primum genus, Idola Tribus; secundum, Idola Specus; tertium, Idola Fori; quartum, Idola Theatri vocentur.—*Nov. Org.*, Lib. I., 39.

Quatuor vero sunt maxima comprehendendæ veritatis offendicula, quæ omnem quemcunque sapientem impediunt, et vix aliquem permittunt ad verum titulum sapientiæ pervenire; viz., fragilis et indignæ auctoritatis exemplum, consuetudinis duiturnitas, vulgi sensus imperiti, et propriæ ignorantiæ occultatio cum ostentatione sapientiæ apparentis.—*Opus Majus*, Lib. I., p. 2.

IV.

Their agreement here is more than fanciful. They have the same ideas in view, and their reconciliation will not take many words. Take the first illusion mentioned by the chancellor: "The idols of the tribe," he tells us, "are inherent in human nature, and

the very tribe or race of man; for it is a false assertion that the sense of man is the measure of things." That is, things may be otherwise than as man conceives them. This, by the way, was the error of Vico, who identified the true and the made—a theory that does not hold good outside of mathematics. We are not, therefore, to submit in scientific matters to a view of a thing simply because other men — perhaps the great majority — accept that view of it. Witness the belief that color resides in objects. That is a bad argument to say this is held by the majority, and is therefore true. We are quoting from the friar. His idea coincides with that of the chancellor.

FRANCIS BACON.	ROGER BACON.
Idola Tribus sunt fundata in ipsa natura humana, atque in ipsa tribu seu gente hominum. Falso enim asseritur, sensum humanum esse mensuram verum.—*Nov. Org.*, XLI.	Fragilis et indignæ auctoritatis exemplum. Nam quilibet in singulis artibus vitæ et studii et omnis negotii tribus pessimus ad eandem conclusionem utitur argumentis, scil hoc exemplificatum est per majores . . . . . ergo tenendum.—*Opus Majus*, p. 2.

V.

Again, the idols of the cave, that is, the illusions of the individual man, are based upon the bias the mind receives in education.[1] It becomes accustomed

[1] "Idola Specus sunt idola hominis individui. Habet enim unusquisque (præter aberrationes natura humanæ in genere) specum sive cavernam quandam individuam, quæ lumen naturæ frangit et corrumpit; vel propter educationem et conversationem cum aliis." — *Nov. Org.*, XLII.

to a certain way of thinking, and sees things only in that direction. Here is the "prolonged custom" or traditionary habit of Roger Bacon.

VI.

The third, the idols of the market-place, consist of a wrong and silly imposition of words, resulting from the intercourse of man with man. But the sense of the ignorant many is not the one scientific accuracy requires. This is the "popular opinion" of the friar:

FRANCIS BACON.	ROGER BACON.
Homines enim per sermones sociantur; et verba ex captu vulgi imponuntur.—*Nov. Org.*, XLIII.	Vulgi sensus imperiti.—*Opus Majus.*

VII.

The fourth illusion, the idols of the theatre, are identical with the pride of imaginary knowledge of Roger Bacon; for such a pride, in order to hide its ignorance, grows disputatious, and assumes to play a part that is as unreal to it as is the rôle of king to him who impersonates him on the stage.

FRANCIS BACON.	ROGER BACON.
Lastly, there are idols which have immigrated into men's minds from the various dogmas of philosophies, and also from wrong laws of demonstration.	Authors write, and the common people hold many things which are utterly false, by arguments feigned without experiment.

FRANCIS BACON.

These we call idols of the theatre, because all the received systems are, in our judgment, but so many stage-plays, representing worlds of their own creation after an unreal and scenic fashion.

ROGER BACON.

What is worse, men blinded by these four hindrances do not perceive their ignorance, but grow pale and keep aloof, seeing that they find no remedy; and worse still, when in the thickest darkness of error, they consider themselves in the full light of truth.

TEXT.

Sunt denique idola quæ immigrarunt in animos hominum ex diversis dogmatibus philosopiarum, ac etiam ex perversis legibus demonstrationem; quæ Idola Theatri nominamus; quia quot philosophiæ receptæ aut inventæ sunt tot fabulas productas et actas censemus, quæ mundos effecerunt fictitios et scenicos.—*Nov. Org.*, 44.

Nam multa scribunt auctores et vulgus tenet per argumenta quæ fingit sine experientia quæ sunt omnino falsa.—*Opus Majus*, Pars. VI.

Sed pejus est quod homines horum quatuor caligine excæcati non percepiunt suam ignorantiam, sed cum omni cautela palliunt et defendunt, quatenus remedium non inveniunt; et quod pessimum est cum sint in tenebris errorum densissimis, æstimunt se esse in plena luce veritatis.—Pars. I., p. 2.

VIII.

It has been seen that Francis Bacon asserted the superiority of the experimental over the syllogistic method; so does the friar, but without destroying the latter.

FRANCIS BACON.	ROGER BACON.
We reject demonstration by syllogism . . . . for the syllogism is made up of propositions, propositions of words; but words are only marks and signs of notions. Consequently it enforces assent, not things.	There are two methods of knowing—argument and experiment. Argument concludes a question, but does not give certainty nor remove doubt, so that the soul rests in the perception of a truth, unless that truth is aided by experience.

TEXT.

At nos demonstrationem per syllogismum rejicimus . . . . . quod syllogismus ex propositionibus constet, propositiones ex verbis, verba autem notionum tesseræ ac signa sunt.—*Inst. Mag. Intro.* Assensum itaque constringit, non res.—*Nov. Org.*, 13.	Duo sunt modi cognoscendi; scilicet per argumentum et per experimentum. Argumentum concludit et facit nos concludere questionem; sed non certificat neque removet dubitationem ut quiescat animus in intuitu veritatis, nisi eam inveniat viâ experientiæ.—*Opus Majus*, Pars. VI., p. 445.

"It is indeed an extraordinary circumstance," Whewell remarks, "to find a writer of the thirteenth century not only recognizing experiment as one source of knowledge, but urging its claims as something far more important than men had yet been aware of, exemplifying its value by striking and just examples, and speaking of its authority with a dignity of diction which sounds like a foremurmur of the Baconian sentences uttered nearly four hundred years later." [1]

The spirit and scope of the great chancellor's method are the same with those of his greater name-

[1] *History of the Inductive Sciences*, Vol. I., p. 579.

sake's; while in scientific attainments the latter was by far superior to the former. "In this respect," says Whewell, "he was far more fortunate than Francis Bacon."[1]

Enough has been laid down to show that the seed of the Baconian method was deeply implanted in the soil of thought, and was there germinating and patiently abiding its time; and as a premature day in spring brings forth an occasional blossom or fresh blade, to be nipped away by the next frost, so did the times and a short sunshine of papal favor draw out that blossom of the inductive method, to show its head for a moment, and then to rest in oblivion for nigh four hundred years, until the intellectual atmosphere became more favorable to its growth and development.

CHAPTER X.

THE LAW OF THOUGHT.

THE history of literature is the history of ideas and their influence. They appear and disappear; but in obedience to law. What Montesquieu says of political changes is equally applicable to intellectual ones. "As men have always the same passions," says this only too pagan philosopher, "the occasions that produce great changes differ, but their

[1] *History of the Inductive Sciences*, Vol. I., p. 521.

causes are always the same."[1] There is Phœnicia of old. She was mistress of the sea, the queen of commerce, the synonym of all that was precious in silks, dyes,[2] and the like. Her people were wealthy, enterprising, and nursed in luxury. They were also materialists in their views. The philosophy that can be considered theirs is based on the doctrine of atoms; it is materialistic. So it is with that nation in modern times which is the mistress of commerce. With her, too, originated that modern materialism that infested Europe during the eighteenth century. Her philosophy—the philosophy of Locke and Bacon, the only philosophy that is characteristically hers — is materialistic in its principles and its application. It pervades much that has been since written in English literature. Materialistic criteria run through the poetry, the fiction, the philosophy of England in the estimate of the age, its progress and civilization, as well as in the ideal of perfect happiness drawn in these subjects. It is so, under like circumstances, at all times and in all places. The laws of thought are as constant as the movements of the spheres of the heavens. Christianity has not changed them. It does not alter man's nature; it ennobles, purifies, directs it; but it is still the same human nature, in which are inherent the same passions, and possessed of the same fundamental tendency of thought.

[1] Comme les hommes out eu dans tous les temps les mêmes passions, les occasions qui produisent les grands changements sout differentes, mais les causes sout toujours les mêmes. — *Grand. et Dec. de Rome*, chap. i.

[2] *e. g.* Φοίνιξ, and all its derivatives.

his to discover, develop, and apply it; but he cannot create it. That belongs to the Infinite Intelligence alone. He it is who creates it, and who creates the light of our reason by which to perceive it. He is the Word, by virtue of which we have power of speech and understanding — "He who from the beginning — from the foundation of the world — sowed nutritious seeds; he who in each age rained down the Lord, the Word;"[1] that Word from which are all things, and which all things speak;[2] that Word whose splendor is reflected in the beauties of language and literature, though brokenly and dimly so, on account of man's darkness of understanding and the presence of the human spirit which absorbs the divine radiance. Now, truth being independent of man, he could not receive it except as communicated to him by its Creator. He is from the beginning a creature of education. Therefore it is that no people has ever by itself been able to rise from barbarism to civilization. No nation, of its own accord, and without external influence, has ever developed a literature. And the universal history of literature goes to show that the sum of natural truth is a constant quantity. This is the most general law of thought. Reason further confirms it; for at all times, and in all places, the material world, humanity, the general relations of life, the social problems arising therefrom, and their solutions, the questionings of the soul, are all the same; and the same truths are

[1] Εις γαρ ὁ τῆς ἐν ανθρώποις γῆς γηωργος, ὁ ἄνωθεν σπειρων ἐκ καταβολῆς κόσμου τα θρεπτικά σπερματα, ὁ τον Κυριον καθ' ἑκάστον καιρόν ἐπομβρισας Δογον. — *S. Clement. Strom.*, Lib. I., cap. xii.

[2] Imitation, B. I., ch. iii.

evolved, and the same thoughts appear in different garbs. "Nothing under the sun is new; neither is any man able to say: Behold, this is new; for it hath already gone before in the ages that were before us."[1]

CHAPTER XI.

CHARACTERISTICS OF ANCIENT AND MODERN LITERATURE.

THERE is a marked difference between ancient and modern literature. The words Pagan and Christian do not express this difference with sufficient discrimination; for Pagan authors have always had some gleams of primitive revelation and the common fund of natural truths to draw from, while Christians are under Pagan influence in letters on account of a nameless something — a harmonious development — that pervades their writings, and which no amount of elaboration seems capable of attaining. Idiomatic differences will, in part, account for this difference of style. The ancient classics were living languages when written by Cæsar and Cicero, Plato and Homer. These men wrote in the idioms they thought in. Hence that grace and naturalness that seem ever absent from a modern production in the same tongues. There is always something lost in translation; and

[1] *Ecclesiastes*, chap. i., 10.

that is a rapid process of translation by which we think in one language and write in another. Now, there is a compactness in ancient dialects which modern ones possess not, and seem to have lost in parting with the method of inflections in their grammatical structure. But though the ancients of Greece and Rome said their say well, moderns have equal facility in expressing themselves, and need leave nothing unsaid for want of a medium. Especially is our English speech equal to all shades of thought, from the tenderness of love to highest abstractions of philosophy. Perhaps moderns ought to look higher, for a more spiritual and spiritualizing standard of excellence in literature, than that physical and natural beauty which characterizes Pagan master-pieces.

Another cause of this difference is to be found in the antagonistic natures of the Pagan and Christian religions. Christianity addresses itself to all classes, be they Aryan, Turanian, or Semetic; Paganism is national, and varies with the genius of each people. Christianity imposes a law that is opposed to, and curbs the inclinations of, corrupt human nature; whereas Paganism drifted in harmony with men's passions — consecrated them in their most enormous excesses — and clashed not with the spirit of the times, which, as Tacitus profoundly remarks, "is to corrupt and be corrupted"[1] — an expression, by the way, tinged with Christianity. Therefore it is that Christian thinkers are out of harmony with their age, while the great men of antiquity are thoroughly imbued with the spirit of theirs. But there is an excep-

[1] "Corrumpere et corrumpi seculum vocatur."—*De Germ.*, XIX.

tion; and it is noteworthy, for it is the rule of modern times. When Socrates rose above the level of Pagan greatness and Pagan thought, and attempted to teach his countrymen the great truths of which he was the depositary — attempted, so to speak, to make headway against the stream of corruption in which Greece was drifting — he was scouted as a fool and a perverter of youth. Modern times have had benefactors of humanity, who also endeavored to stem the tide of corruption — men of God, saintly characters — and they, like Socrates, have been the butt of calumny and misrepresentation, but by men who would have been foremost in presenting the cup of hemlock to Socrates.

Thus Christianity introduced a social problem which was of easy solution for the Pagan world — which the Middle Ages were approximating to — but which, since the sixteenth century, seems almost impracticable. It is the reconciling of the secular and religious elements of society. There is at present an antagonism between these two spirits that is gathering into a death-struggle for predominancy. All the earnest thinkers of the world have this problem at heart, often without their knowing it, and each endeavors to solve it in his own way — the Positivist, for instance, by substituting the worship of humanity for that of God; the Illuminati, by replacing religion by learning and enlightenment of the understanding. The school-room is the battle-ground to-day. Let the child have a religious moulding, and, as a rule, religion will have a hold on him through life; bring him up indifferent to creeds, and, in all probability, he will turn out a disciple of naturalism.

While this struggle lasts, we cannot hope for a literature completely developed in all its relations. For that, there must be an all-absorbing idea — as Rome was for the Roman, as the beautiful was for the Greek, as Jehovah was for the Hebrew, or as the illusory nature of the present life was for the ancient Hindu. Men's minds must live content in that idea, feed on it, feel secure in its truth and uncontrovertibility; and with the ease and calm thus induced — an ease and calm unknown in this age of antagonism between conflicting doctrines — they would produce a literary era to which, so far as regards harmony of parts and completeness of finish, the other golden eras of modern times only approximated. As has been seen, they were possessed of this sense of security, and hence their preëminence. Not till the millennium will all these conditions obtain.

In the master-pieces of the day a void is clearly perceived. They abound in strikingly beautiful passages, but, as a whole, they fall short of expectation. They are, in a manner, failures. They only reflect the discord of the age, its party spirit and its partial truths. Hence the subjectivism so prevalent in modern literature. Nearly all the poetry and fiction, and history even, of our days, is written with an aim to promote some view or speculation of the author. Such is the spirit of the *Excursion*, of *Sartor Resartus*, of *The Revolt of Islam*, all of which are inspired by the psychologico-pantheistic philosophy prevalent. It is destructive of literary art. Only in lyric poetry is it legitimate; for lyric poetry at all times, as Neibuhr remarks, is eminently subjective. It is based on the

false principle that things are necessarily as they are conceived to be; and accordingly, whatever the author touches upon, he colors with his individual moods. The spirit is one with the rationalism of the sixteenth century.

But Christianity has imparted to modern literature, over that of antiquity, a preëminence that makes up for its other deficiencies. It has turned man's attention upon himself as man, and taught him to know himself. The light of its truth thrown upon his heart has revealed the innermost folds thereof, and drawn out its most secret aspirations. Hence that intimate knowledge of character — that development of soul-study in the drama, and still more in the novel. Take, for instance, the two supreme efforts of ancient and modern tragedy — the *Hamlet* of Shakspeare and the *Œdipus Rex* of Sophocles. They point the distinction exactly; for one is a soul-study, and the chief interest of the other lies in its intricacy of plot.

Another effect of Christianity, favorable to the diffusion of thought, is the breaking down of all distinction between Jew and Gentile, Greek and Barbarian, and the uniting of peoples of all climes in a common bond of brotherhood; in consequence of which, ideas that in former times were confined within the limits of a very narrow circle, now gird the globe with the speed of the lightning flash, and interest the whole civilized world. They act, move, revolutionize; they even have their martyrs. The average intelligence of the majority is elevated; but what is gained in extension is lost in comprehension; for ideas so crowd upon us, that we take time to pursue very few to their

ultimate conclusions. We have grown fast. And America is preëminent in this particular; for, if there be no people more credulous, and more easily imposed upon for a time, there is no people on earth who sooner perceive a sham. Thus, twenty years or more ago, when Coleridge and Carlyle were talking the English into the doctrines of German transcendentalism, America was fully initiated into its tenets, and has since outgrown them, having found them to be insubstantial nothing — mere day-dreams — while the same theories are still gaining ground in England and France.

Let us now examine the most important attempts of the day to reconcile the secular and religious elements of society, absorb them all into a united whole, and set upon them the seal of harmony. Three systems especially present themselves for our consideration, viz.: Positivism, Evolutionism, and Hegelism. A few remarks on each in its relations with literature and intellectual development.

CHAPTER XII.

POSITIVISM AND LITERATURE.

AUGUSTE COMTE is the founder of Positivism. He thought that we had arrived at a period when men's minds were so agitated that they required a resting-place, and therefore a doctrine adequate to bind them in unison and harmony. He saw the inconsistencies we have pointed out in Protestantism, and found there no refuge for the troubled mind. The Catholic Church he stopped longer at, and recognized the noble work it did in the past; but considered it insufficient for the intellectual classes. The demands of its faith were, in his opinion, too trying upon reason. He therefore established a religious system to meet the moral anarchy, and a philosophical system to meet the intellectual anarchy, into which society in his view had fallen. The religion he proposed was the worship of humanity; the philosophy, Positivism. Is the remedy adequate to the evil?

The worship of humanity is not a new thing. Ever since the coming of the Redeemer, humanity, regenerated and deified in His divine person, has been the object of Christian worship. But Comte would do away with the supernatural, and consider humanity by itself as "the continuous whole of convergent beings."[1] Now humanity cannot give more than it has. Humanity is only society; and according to Comte's own statement, society is out of joint, and

[1] *Cours de Politique Positive*, Tome I., p. 30.

suffers from intellectual and moral anarchy. This is what society is equal to. It has never, in any stage of its existence, been able to regenerate itself. It has always required extraneous assistance. It bears in its womb the seeds of corruption, dissolution, and distraction, rather than the germs of its own regeneration. When, in pre-historic times, the whole world becomes corrupt, the Supreme Being destroys it, saving only one family with which to repeople it. When, again, it merges into idolatry, it does not rise from the shadows of death in which it finds itself; the Redeemer comes, and teaches a purifying and supernatural doctrine, and raises man into that higher plane of life that has become the basis of our modern civilization. These illustrations are for the Christian reader, not for the Positivist. For him we are content to lay statement against statement, for he proves not, and we are in possession.

M. Comte states that there is no absolute truth, and therefore no God; that the idea of God is a metaphysical hypothesis, and, like every hypothesis, a fiction of the mind, though good for a time, inasmuch as it led to the system of rationalism that does away with it, being able to work better without it. He arrives at this conclusion by an hypothesis—a fiction of the mind also—in which he states that the progress of religion has been, first fetichism, then polytheism, afterwards monotheism, and finally the present religion, of which he is high-priest, the worship of humanity.[1] Now, reason conceives this order to

[1] Cette loi consiste en ce que chacune de nos conceptions principales, chaque branche de nos connaissances, passe successivement par trois états théoriques différents: l'état theologique, ou fictif; l'état me

impossible; for as right is before wrong, or health prior to sickness, so must truth have been before error. Therefore fetichism or polytheism could not have been previous to the true religion, whether it be the humanity worship of Comte, or monotheism, as we hold it. Nor does the history of religion point to this order of development. We turn over the pages of the sacred Scriptures, and we everywhere meet with one living God as existing from the beginning—"the ancient of days;"[1] whose "years are unto generation and generation."[2] We consult the Vedas of India, and we read of a supreme deity, Indra—"him whom harvests do not age, nor moons; Indra, whose days do not wither."[3] In the poetry of Greece there is also greater than all others "the great Zeus in heaven, who watches over all things and rules."[4] In the poetry of the Latins we meet with the same distinction. They also have their Jupiter—their father Zeus—who rules and overawes the affairs of both gods and men:

> "O qui res hominumque Deûmque
> Æternis regis imperiis, et fulmine terres."

Whichever way we look, we find an acknowledgment of one Supreme Deity, whether it be to the dusky child of the West, to whom He is known as the Great Spirit, or to the son of the Celestial Empire, in whose philosophy, as in that of Lao-Tseu, we read of Tao, the primordial reason, "a being immense,

Physique, ou abstrait; l'état scientifique, ou positif.—*Philosophie Positive*, Tome I., Leçon Ire., p. 8.

[1] Dan. vii. 9. [2] Ps. ci. 25.

[3] Ná yám járanti s'arádah na mâ'sâh na dyâ'vah I'ndram avakars'-ayanti.—*Rig Veda*, VI. 24, 7.

[4] Ἐπὶ μέγας οὐρανῷ
Ζεύς, ὃς ἐφορᾷ πάντα καὶ κραίνει.—*Electra*, v. 188.

silent, immutable, but always active; who is the creator of all things — 'the mother of the world.'"[1] And the earlier the document, the more clearly is the existence of one Supreme Being asserted. Monotheism is prior to polytheism or fetichism, as the thing symbolized exists before the symbol.

Error is invariably based upon truth, and its only effective refutation is to strip the truth of its false covering, and show it up as it really is. This deification of humanity in the sacred person of the Redeemer we have seen to be a fact. But inasmuch as the Positivist believes not in the supernatural, this is not the fact he has in view. It is another, also due to Christianity. Only since its introduction can it be rightly said of man, "The truth will make you free." Christianity taught true liberty. It abolished slavery, placed all men upon an equal footing, and gave the individual, for the first time in the world's history, his true place in society. In Pagan times he was not his own master; he was a child of the State, devoted to the State, living for the State, claimed by the State, absorbed in the State. Christianity inspired him with a sense of his dignity, and taught him that there was something higher than the State to live for. In this feeling he has grown up and waxed strong, and it is a misapprehension of this feeling and its true cause that dictates the religion of Comte, and leads the philosopher of atheism to say: "The historical progress of religion consists in this, that what was regarded by an earlier religion as objective, is now regarded as subjective; what was formerly worshipped and contemplated as God, is now perceived to be

[1] M. Abel-Remusat, *Melanges Asiatiques.*

something human."[1] But to exaggerate humanity as a whole is to belittle the individual, deprive him again of his personal rights, and absorb him in the mass. Indeed, the Positivist says that the individual man has no rights, no free will, that he is a creature of law, and that he imagines himself free, because of his ignorance of the complex laws of sociology. This is a verification of the poet's line:

"And the individual withers, and the world is more and more."

In the philosophy of Positivism, the only legitimate aim of man is industry, the industry that benefits humanity. In this is to consist the sum of his happiness; in this is his whole being absorbed. The Positivist lays stress upon this theory of disinterestedness as an improvement upon what he calls the selfish doctrine of a future reward promulgated by the gospel. This is a sophism. It ignores the fundamental principle of Christianity, which is the principle of love. And love is unselfish. The reward that follows the fulfilment of the law of love is a necessity of the end of our creation, and due solely to the goodness of the Creator. He might have created us to fulfil a temporary purpose of life, such as the horse and the dog — and this is the theory of the Positivist; but since, in His infinite love, He has, in creating us man, bestowed upon us an immortal soul, with infinite yearnings, that are never satisfied until they feed upon their Creator, we ought to be doubly thankful, and bless Him for it the more.

The Positivist says, with Herbert Spencer and Sir

[1] Feuerbach.

William Hamilton, that as we cannot have absolute and infinite notions, we cannot have notions of the absolute and infinite. But if we had no notions of absolute and infinite being, how could we think it as such, how have words to express it, how use these words so accurately in all our reasonings? Evidently, then, we have such notions, and our knowledge is more than relative.

But the spirit that actuates the Positivists is the same that inspired the Encyclopædists of the eighteenth century. It is a matter of pride to them to think that they are continuing and perfecting the work of D'Alembert and Diderot. They are children of the same spirit of rationalism. They might accumulate scientific facts and develop scientific theories; but in their hands the higher species of literature would be cramped and considered a thing of silly amusement. "Such a mere mathematical people," says Schlegel, "with minds thus sharpened and pointed by mathematical discipline, would and could never possess a rich and various intellectual existence, nor even probably ever attain to a living science, or a true science of life."[1] The slightest contact with rationalism blights poetic genius; and when a rationalist wishes to touch humanity, he must become a child of faith — a believer in tradition and in the supernatural — even as humanity is.

Not in Positivism, then, do we find a bond of reconciliation, in which all the elements of society may become a unit. It is contradictory in its philosophy, absurd in its religion, and in its tendency destructive of the literary spirit. How is it with Evolutionism?

[1] *Philosophy of History*, p. 238.

CHAPTER XIII.

EVOLUTIONISM AND LITERATURE.

HERBERT SPENCER is the philosopher of Evolutionism. It is allied to Positivism. Comte, in making humanity self-sufficient, instead of raising it up and deifying it, as was his intention, would have been the death of humanity. Exaggeration invariably induces reaction. Therefore, Herbert Spencer conceived humanity as only one element of Cosmos, evolved in the slow process of time from the primary forms of life, but entirely subject to the same laws which all matter, organic and inorganic, obeys. He is more logical than Comte. For while, with the latter, he believes that there is no absolute truth, he does not assert as an absolute truth that there is no God; but holding to the relativity of all knowledge, he says that God may or may not be. He relegates Him to the unknowable.

Comte denies that man has a soul; so does Herbert Spencer. With Darwin, he considers "that the mental faculties of man and the lower animals do not differ in kind, although immensely in degree;"[1] and concludes "that man is the co-descendant with other mammals, of a common progenitor,"[2] and that he, "like every other animal, has no doubt advanced to his present high condition through a struggle for existence;"[3] or as Herbert Spencer himself expresses

[1] *Descent of Man*, I., p. 179. [2] Ibid., II., p. 369.
[3] *Ibid.*, II., p. 385.

it, through "the survival of the fittest." From this position he fearlessly draws his consequences. He infers that man is not responsible to anything higher than society for his acts; that belief in God is acquired by education, and did not exist in the primeval man; that our sense of right and wrong comes from experience; that "forms of thought (and by implication all intuitions) are products of organized and inherited experiences"[1]—"the absolute internal uniformities generated by infinite repetitions of absolute external uniformities"[2]—that mind is "a product of evolution," and thought, of cerebral action. This is Evolutionism in a nutshell. It changes our whole view of thought, the soul, society, and God. At the outset we felt compelled to diverge from it explicitly. Humanity without a supernatural order, without a revelation, without a personal God, is to us an enigma, an unsolved and unsolvable problem. Admit these elements and their consequences, and the universe has a meaning, society in all its aberrations can be accounted for, and literature, its laws and history, becomes a profitable study, comprehensible in their light. Granting that humanity and the material universe are solely of the natural order evolved from primary forms of life, what is their aim? Why are we here restless, malcontent, with an infinity of desires unsatisfied, living and dying in struggle, appearing for a moment, and then disappearing forever, going on, on, now merging into barbarism, now rising into civilization, our thoughts scarce our own, we ourselves

[1] *Principles of Psychology*, p. 571.

[2] *Essays*, Mill *vs.* Hamilton, The Test of Truth, p. 409.

the creatures of fiction and fancy, the victims of a life-long delusion — and all for what? Mr. Spencer does not tell us.

"Absolute morality," he says, "means conformity to the laws of complete life."[1] A law implies order; an order, a purpose; a purpose, one purposing, a cause; and the cause purposing is the imposer of the law, the Creator to whom alone belongs the right of determining the laws of complete life. And what is complete life in Herbert Spencer's philosophy? He reduces it to a thing of time. The aim of life is with him as with Comte and his master, St. Simon, industry; and complete life is a life blessed with temporary advantages. But how few of the world's millions enjoy this beatitude, temporary though it be! How few are content with their worldly lot! To the great majority, then, life is aimless and a burden. It is no day-dream; it is the agony of a night-mare. Literature is a raving maniac's utterances. What do I seek in speculating? The aim of life? But life will be past before I apply my results. The benefit of the many? The many will not understand my views; they will live and die struggling for the unattainable, each in his own way.

The moral sense by which this absolute morality is known, Herbert Spencer states to be "the experiences of utility organized and consolidated through all past generations of the human race"—"certain emotions responding to right and wrong;"[2] and Mr. Darwin under-

[1] *Essays, Prison Ethics*, p. 224.

[2] Letter to Mr. Mill in Bains' "Mental and Moral Science," p. 722, ed. 1868, quoted in Darwin, *Descent of Man*, I., p. 97.

takes to explain its acquired origin as being due to the fact that "the more enduring social instincts conquer the less persistent instincts."[1] "At the moment of action," he says, "man will no doubt be apt to follow the stronger impulse; and though this may occasionally prompt him to the noblest deeds, it will far more commonly lead him to gratify his own desires at the expense of other men. But after this gratification, when past and weaker impressions are contrasted with the ever-enduring social instincts, retribution will surely come. Man will then feel dissatisfied with himself, and will resolve, with more or less force, to act differently for the future. This is conscience; for conscience looks backward and judges past actions, inducing that kind of dissatisfaction which, if weak, we call regret, and if severe, remorse."[2] Whence, then, arises this remorse experienced in the gratification of desires that are at the expense of no society, and that are a source of pleasure to the individual — thoughts, for instance, that he knows to be wrong? He is not amenable to society for them; for he has injured no man. And yet he feels that he is guilty — that there is a court to which he is amenable. This can be explained only by the consciousness, more or less distinct, of the Supreme Judge who implanted in man's breast the moral sense. Furthermore, does not the fact of feeling that an injury is done to others, imply a sense of injury — that is, of what is just and unjust — in a word, of right and wrong? In other words, the dissatisfaction, or remorse, is based on a sense of right and wrong. But Mr. Darwin argues that conscience

[1] *Descent of Man*, I., p. 83. [2] *Descent of Man*, I., p. 87.

— that is, the sense of right and wrong — proceeds from the dissatisfaction. Here is a vicious circle.

In good truth, there is an absolute morality beyond all cavil, as well as beyond all considerations of utility. It is universal. It exists in the rudest savage tribes, howsoever distorted and misapplied, as decidedly as in the most civilized community. And what a weak barrier Mr. Spencer, in his opposite doctrines, places before evil-doing! "If," the holder of such doctrine would argue, "I know that I can safely better myself at the expense of my neighbor; that the feeling to be overcome in doing so, the remorse to be smothered, is only a trait hereditary in me — as my features, my eyes, my hair — and that I am responsible to no one but him I injure, I am not going to stay my course; it is a struggle for life, for enjoyment, for predominancy; it is his lookout; and I must enjoy life, since there is no hereafter for me." Objections are as straws before the torrent in the presence of such an argument, when the temptation is strong and the way clear. And yet, Mr. Spencer imagines that he is benefitting society in paving the way for such arguments and their practical results. He fancies that he has the secret that will harmonize the elements of society. It is told in two words — scientific training. That is the panacea for all the ills to which flesh is heir. The Cosmist would abolish all ideas of a God, of the supernatural, of religious creeds, as superstitions, by cultivating the mental soil scientifically, and thus inducing habits of thought free from such beliefs. Human society does not become better by such a process. Suppress religion, and morality soon vanishes; or tamper with

morality, and little difficulty will be found in eradicating religion. And with one or other of these results achieved, let him who dares attempt to control the masses. Mr. Fiske of Harvard, the American exponent of Evolutionism, knows this, for he says: "The cosmic philosopher is averse to proselytism, and has no sympathy with radicalism or infidelity. *For he knows that the theological habits of thought are relatively useful, while scepticism, if permanent, is intellectually and morally pernicious; witness the curious fact that radicals are prone to adopt retrograde social theories.*"[1] That which Evolutionism would avoid is precisely what it brings about. It is inconsistent. It destroys theological habits of thought while acknowledging them to be relatively useful; it fosters scepticism, knowing that it is morally and intellectually pernicious; it encourages the radicalism that is prone to adopt retrograde social theories. We said that Evolutionism is more logical than Positivism. It walks correctly one step farther, then totters and falls.

With all its shortcomings, Evolutionism has attractions for the human mind, and we are therefore disposed to regard it as more than a passing phase of thought. For the scientific mind, whose science is fragmentary, the simple explanation of the evolution of life possesses a fascination that it knows not how to overcome. The vagueness with which the theory is surrounded, the necessity under which the mind is of not examining the details too closely, and the host of fresh objections which it gives rise to against

[1] Lecture quoted in *Brownson's Review* for October, 1873, Art. "Refutation of Atheism."

faith and revelation, have all tended to make it popular with a certain class of scientific men. The mysterious Unknowable to which Herbert Spencer relegates the inexplicables of science, that is in the background of the energies of nature, possesses a charm for the dreamy sentimentality that has supplanted religion, to a great extent, among all classes outside the Catholic Church. The partial revival of nature-worship will find in this mysterious energy a new bond to strengthen and rivet its claims on man's thoughts and affections, and will carry him far beyond the nature over which Rousseau brooded, and of which Shelley sang. The contemplation of the Unknowable has only one resting-place — that which is truly unknowable—Nothingness—the Nirvana of the Buddhist; and here it is that Aryan nature-worship drifts to, on the principles of Evolutionism. The reconciliation is not here. With a morality the basis of immorality, a philosophy the destruction of thought, an industry the death of the higher species of literature, and a religion that is atheistic, Evolutionism has little in it that is ennobling to humanity.

CHAPTER XIV.

HEGELISM AND LITERATURE.

PERVADING the Relativism of Comte and Herbert Spencer, there is the Absolutism of the age, which also has its advocates. Hegel is the philosopher of the Absolute. To understand his philosophical position rightly, we must glance at the history of modern philosophy in Germany.

Kant is the founder of transcendentalism. In asserting that we can only know phenomena, that the noumenon or essence is beyond our knowing, that time and space are mere subjective conditions of thinking, he opened the door for the speculations that have as their chief representatives Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel. Fichte destroyed all objectivity, and, as we have seen, basing knowledge upon the ego—das Ich — self,— he found himself incompetent to assert more than his own identity, accepted the situation, and settled himself into the conviction that the external world was only a projection of the ego, that it received its shaping from the ego, as a liquid from the vessel in which it is placed; and he thus ended in subjective pantheism. Schelling is known as the philosopher of nature. He conceived all things absorbed in one infinite substance, asserted universal identity, and thus ended in objective pantheism.

Then came Hegel. He taught that all nature, both the material and spiritual world, is a manifestation of

the Idea which he calls reason—vernunft — in philosophy, and the world-spirit — welt-geist — in history. "Reason . . . . is substance as well as infinite power, its own infinite material underlying all the natural and spiritual life which it originates, as also the infinite form, that which sets this material in motion."[1] That is, Hegel's Idea is his God. It is an absolute, impersonal, progressive, and ever-progressing Being, with progress for its law, and freedom for its essence and aim. This is not the God of revelation, the God of Christianity. He is a personal God, having Himself for His own law, His own end and aim. An impersonal God is no God. It is a mistaken notion to consider personality as limiting. It only distinguishes, characterizes. In finite beings it is accompanied with the idea of limitation. In the infinite Being it is the completion of His nature. A God with an incomplete and imperfect nature is no God. That which is capable of increase or diminution is not infinite. Thus the Hegelian God is an idol of Hegel's own making.

History, according to Hegel, is the progress of humanity towards freedom. The essence of human progress he holds to be the clearer manifestation of the world-spirit. But the essence of spirit is freedom, pure freedom, potentially; actually, freedom cramped

[1] "Durch die speculative Erkenntniss in ihr wird es erweisen, das die Vernunft — bei diesem Ausdruke Können wir hier stehen bleiben, ohne die Beziehung und das Verhältniss zu Gott näher zu erörtern — die *Substanz* wie die *unendliche Macht*, sich selbst der *unendliche Stoff* alles natürlichen und geistigen Lebens, wie die *unendliche Form*, die Bethätigung dieses ihres Inhalts ist."—*Phil. der Geschicte*, Einleitung, s. 12; *Hegel's Werke*, 9ter Band.

by contingencies. Therefore, to use his own language, "universal history is the manifestation of spirit in the process of working out that which it is potentially."[1] The peoples of the East knew only *one* free person; they were all his slaves. Pagan Greece and Rome realized the fact that *some* were free; but they held slaves, and this marred their civilization. But Christianity taught for the first time to the Aryan race that all men were free; that not *one* or *some*, but *all*, stood in the image of their Creator, equal before Him in their nature and essence. This is the drift of Hegel's argument. "The German nations, under the influence of Christianity, were the first to attain the consciousness that man as man is free; that it is the freedom of spirit which constitutes its essence. The consciousness arose first in religion, the inmost region of spirit."[2] Freedom, then, is the aim of humanity. This is the focus towards which all nations converge. Freedom, and not lawlessness. Hegel makes the distinction; for he states to the effect that true freedom consists in the harmony between reason and the objective restraint of the law; that is, reason sees such restraint to be good and wholesome, and accordingly submits.

Here is a bond of union for all the elements of so-

[1] In diesem Sinne Können wir sagen, das die Weltgeschicte, die Darstellung ist, wie der Geist zu dem Bewusstsein dessen kommt, was er an sich bedeutet.—*Phil. der Geschicte*, Einleitung.

[2] "Erst die germanischen Nationen sind in Christenthume zum Bewusstsein gekommen, das der Mensch als Mensch frei, die Freiheit des Geistes, seine eigenste Natur ausmacht; diess Bewusstsein ist zuerst in der Religion, in der innersten Region des Geistes aufgegangen."—*Ibid.*, Einleitung, seit 22.

ciety. Every man, be he Pagan or Christian, loves freedom, seeks it if he has it not, and having it, rejoices in its possession. It ennobles life. It is one of the greatest blessings the individual can have. Beneath its invigorating influence, his whole nature expands into twofold energy. But before men unite, they must know why they are to make freedom the aim of their existence; for freedom is not a final cause. We are free for a purpose — that we may the better perform the functions of life. Are these functions to be performed for life's sake, or for an hereafter? In Hegel's philosophy, we are parts of the great whole — the all-absorbing Absolute, necessitated by our nature to seek freedom for freedom's sake, and for the benefit of those coming after us; and, after our share of the work shall have been accomplished, we will be merged into the primordial substance whence we emanated. Our reason tells us differently. Hegel has solved the easy part of the problem of existence, and therefore his philosophy is fragmentary; and the philosophy that grasps not the whole meaning of life is necessarily false. "To forget in this life the care of the future, which is inseparably united with a divine Providence, and to be content with a certain inferior grade of natural right, which an atheist can also hold, is to mutilate science in its most beautiful parts, and destroy many good actions." It is Leibnitz who so speaks.

Though Hegel comes nearest to the solution of the great difficulty of modern times, still he stops short of the real aim of life, and for substantial realities would give us empty phantoms. He, as well as Comte and Herbert Spencer, ignores the most strongly

attested principles of thought and existence, and heeds not the loudest asseverations of human nature concerning its future destiny, the immortal spark that gives it life, and the personal God from whom it came. All three systems are further developments of the rationalistic spirit of the sixteenth century. That spirit is still living. It pervades all classes of society. It is embodied in the poetry, the philosophy, the fiction of the age. It is to be met with in men's religious professions. Lecture-rooms breathe its atmosphere. Magazines and newspapers exhale its odors.

Rationalism is universal. Since it is destructive of all thought, we have to combat it with sound logic and deep meditation, in which alone we will find the fixed principles and the precision of ideas requisite to check its fearful progress. Since it throws society into disorder, it behooves us to set our face against it and hold to the life-giving truths that keep society together. Since, in denying God, it is opening the flood-gates of socialism, by making man a creature of chance, purposeless in life, the victim of illusions in every stage of his existence, from the cradle to the grave, it becomes our bounden duty to love, honor, respect, worship, and loudly proclaim that God whose presence explains the origin of good and evil, the plan and purpose of history, the destiny of humanity, and the meaning of the universe.

PART II.

THEORY.

CHAPTER I.

THE BEAUTIFUL IN LITERATURE.

HAVING considered literature in its various relations with thought, with language, with such influences, whether of persons or times, as have affected it and given it a value of relation, we now proceed to dwell upon it in its intrinsic nature. It is evidently a power. It is one of the mediums invariably made use of in civilizing a nation. It possesses a formative character that, in the end, triumphs over material force, be its energy what it may. We have, then, to inquire what is the secret of this power.

A classic is the best representative of a people's literature. It lives through the wear and tear of time; it is enshrined in a nation's memories; it is an approved expression of its sentiments; it becomes a standard of excellence; it is admired; it pleases; it is the embodiment of the beautiful or sublime; and the more of one or the other it contains, the more genuine a classic it is.

"A thing of beauty is a joy forever."

It pleases, delights, touches our humanity according to the beauty of expression with which it clothes "a thing of beauty," whether it be of the physical, intellectual, or moral world. So, also, a heroic deed or a magnificent scene is the basis of a sublime work. We must, therefore, as a preliminary inquiry, determine the essence of the beautiful.

All beauty is divided into three kinds. There is intellectual beauty, there is moral beauty, and there is physical beauty. The theories of the beautiful that have come under our notice seem to be constructed for one or other of these, to the exclusion of the rest. Evidently, beauty is not exclusively a material thing, or a moral thing, or an intellectual thing. Its essence is distinct from that of each. Beauty is not truth; for truth is reality, and reality is not always beautiful. Neither is it goodness; for each determines different faculties of the soul. Therefore, Cousin errs in saying that moral beauty is "the foundation, the principle, the unity of the beautiful." The moral and the good are identical. That which is formally good is intrinsically moral. Now, the good is necessarily the object of the will, and creates appetition; whereas, the higher the order of beauty is, the less does the soul desire the object in which it resides, and the more content it is to rest in its contemplation. Father Hill lays down the essence of beauty as "proportion and light."[1] The theory errs by saying too much. There is beauty in proportion; but there is more. Not a particle of earth, air, or ocean but has its ultimate

[1] *Elements of Philosophy*, p. 174.

atoms in proportion. The whole material universe is built upon proportion. Destroy the combining ratio of the elements, and order becomes chaos. It is for this reason that where there is beauty, there may be proportion; but proportion constitutes the essence of beauty only in as much as it is a necessary attribute of material existence. But where is the proportion of a moral act, or of a well-put expression, or of a human soul, or of anything without parts? The question is meaningless. Nor is the matter bettered by making the distinction of Jerome Savonarola, who says: "Beauty results from harmony in all the parts and colors. This applies to composite subjects; in simple subjects, beauty is in light."[1] Whether we take light figuratively or literally, we must reject it on the same ground. It says too much. Light is essential to the discernment of deformity as well as of beauty, whether we look on either in the light of day, or in the light of evidence, or in the light of consciousness, or in the light of reason. Mr. Bascom considers beauty a "quality or attribute of objects," and something relative.[2] But the relative connotes the absolute; and if there is a relative beauty, there must necessarily be an absolute beauty.

Beauty has an absolute existence, as truth has, as morality has; and as we cannot say of these last that they are mere qualities or relative existences, neither can we assert the like of the first. Morality is independent of all action, truth of all knowing, and beauty

[1] *Catholic World* for July, 1873, Art. "Jerome Savonarola."

[2] *Æsthetics, or Science of Beauty*, Lect. I., p. 8.

of all existences, even as God, who is the Being infinitely true, moral, and beautiful, is independent of His creation. And as we have a moral sense and a sense of the true, or certitude, so we have a sense of the beautiful, which some call taste, and others, the æsthetic sense. Let us study the nature of this sense.

We perceive a thing of beauty, say an admirably executed picture. A feeling of pleasure possesses our soul, and we forthwith pronounce it beautiful. That feeling has the character of a dim recollection slightly awakened; it is the feeling, more or less intense, that passes over us on recognizing an old friend after a long absence. Plato experienced it in his sensitive nature, and attributed it to a faint reminiscence the soul possesses of a preëxistent state. Wordsworth, who studied every phase of sensation, recognized the feeling, and revived the same doctrine:

> "Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting;
> The soul that rises with us, our life's star,
> Hath elsewhere had its setting,
> And cometh from afar."[1]

There is in this feeling a recollection and a recognition. We are told that man is made in the image and likeness of his Maker. We know furthermore that all things proceeding from their divine Author, are made in accordance with their archetypes in His mind; and therefore that they reflect some one or other attribute of His divinity — that same divinity,

[1] *Ode on the Intimations of Immortality.*

be it remembered, in the image and likeness whereof we have been created. Therefore, that pleasure experienced on beholding "a thing of beauty" is due to our recognition of the "type of perfect" implanted in our natures by the creative act; our power of recognizing being developed in different degrees, as the faculty of knowing or the moral sense is different in each individual. In recognizing, in the object presented to us, a dim reflection of the standard within us, our æsthetic sense is awakened. Therefore, actual beauty does not exist independently of ideal beauty. The former is only the expression, more or less perfect, of the latter, and without it is not known to be beauty. Dr. Brownson has shown, after Kant, that every object, empirically considered, is known only in its relation with the ideal.[1] Each connotes the other.

Turning to the object we call beautiful, we ask: What is there in that object that makes it beautiful? In the case of the picture, we must say that it is not the colors; for another might have placed the same colors in the same proportion, and yet not produce the same effect. Thus there is a vast difference between a real Raphael and a copy. So, too, with human countenances. One face has all the contour and proportion of parts of another; and still we turn from it with disgust, and are ravished with feelings of awe and respect on beholding the other. The same difference is found in two poems. One writer describes a landscape in language select, grammatical,

[1] *Brownson's Review*, for January, 1874. Article, "Refutation of Atheism."

appropriate; we read it, and put the book aside with indifference. Another writer paints the same scene in a few happy phrases, apparently thrown together with less care; still the effect is like magic; we read and re-read the piece; we exclaim: "Magnificent! How grand! What a beautiful word-picture!" Now, in all these instances, one word expresses the whole difference. That one word is EXPRESSION. Its presence gives the beauty; its absence leaves dead colors, dead words, dead features. And it is that expression alone in every beautiful object that has power to awaken the sense of the beautiful in the soul. Hence the success of an artist depends upon his power of infusing expression into his work. And the secret of our pleasure in admiring his production is, that it brings before our consciousness the ideal in our minds.

Here an interesting question arises. In describing the material universe, is all that goes to make up the expression of it, whether on the canvas or in the poem, in nature or in the artist's mind? It is obvious that we are in sympathy with nature. When man fell, nature also was cursed. It is further plain that inert matter does not arouse our sympathy, has for us no expression. A thing is intelligible in proportion as it is intelligent; and as Balmes has shown, we might live forever in presence of the material universe and be no wiser concerning it, if we did not have an idea of it. But the idea of the universe is not its expression as given in its beauties and sublimities. We analyze a piece of granite. It has for us no other expression than the names we impose on its

component parts, and the combining force that keeps them together. It seems to us that there is something more significant in the sleep of winter, in the awakening of spring, in the activity of summer, and in the repose of autumn, than is to be found in death and inertness. To say that the expression of these phenomena was God in nature, would be to make Him an integral part of the universe, the soul of the world; and, with Emerson, we would be obliged to recognize no God who is not "one with the blowing grass and the falling rain." But the divine Artist that fashioned the universe, also infused therein a trace of His own beauty — a reflection of Himself, once clear and serene as the undisturbed lake of crystalline waters; but since the fall, it is a mirror that has been cracked, broken, and bedimmed. That which speaks to us in nature is behind the hill and dale and starry sky, on which we fix our gaze. It is a created, vivifying principle or material soul that communes with us, and that we sympathize with in the material universe. We may then conclude that the expression of nature is external to the mind of him who contemplates it; he imbibes it by degrees, and reproduces all he has received in his masterpiece. Were all that expression in himself primarily, its outward embodiment would have been a divine act. He imitates creation in expressing, according to the strength of his genius, the ideal in his soul; but the expression he gives out has been communicated to him by the spirit of nature. Therefore, that modern subjectivism that would impose the various moods of an author upon nature, and interpret its

expression as the expression of these moods, is based on a false principle. The prophet imagined God present in the whirlwind; but God was not there: it was under the calming influence of the gentle breeze that He made His presence felt.

To sum up: We speak in sign and symbol. The ideal in our mind is symbolical of Him who created it — the Beauty ever ancient and ever new — whom we now see "darkly, as through a glass." Everything perfect in its kind has a beauty of its own; it is the created ideal modelled after the eternal and uncreated ideal in the divine Mind. When the Supreme Being first called things from nothingness, He created each perfect in its kind. After the fall, every creature grew degenerate; but as in the nobler specimens of animal life there is a reversion to that first model,[1] so that instinctive reversion recalls the "type of perfect" — the ideal after which it was fashioned — and we speak of such specimens as beautiful. The beautiful, then, is the expression of the Word. *From one Word are all things, and this one all things speak.*[2] The splendor of that Word it is that we admire in the glowing sunset; that steals into our soul in the lovely landscape; that, beaming from the truly beautiful countenance, inspires awe and respect; that elicits the burst of admiration on witnessing the heroic deed.

[1] It is on an incorrect apprehension of this fact of reversion to a first model that the Darwinian bases his theory of progressive development.

[2] *Imitation*, B. I., ch. iii.

CHAPTER II.

THE CONSERVATIVE PRINCIPLE OF LITERATURE.

WE are now prepared to consider the element in a classic that causes it to outlive the people whose genius gave it birth. We have found that according as it embodies the sublime or beautiful with a corresponsive sympathy — that is, in proportion as it reflects the splendor of God in His creatures — in proportion as it *speaks the Word* — it is an immortal production. The mere outward expression, no matter how graceful and polished it be, does not guarantee immortality; the poet was therefore right:

> "Mortalia facta peribunt:
> Nedum sermonem stet honos et gratia vivax."

It is the soul of language that makes it undying. When that reflects the splendor of the divinity, it becomes enshrined in its beauty, and lights up dark ways through the ages, as the moon gives light and comfort with the borrowed rays of the sun. Read the all-pervading thought of each of the world's three great poets. How runs the key-note of their themes?

In Homer, that which flavors his poems with the divine afflatus, is surely not Achilles' wrath, or Hector's prowess, or the Grecian quarrels, or Ulysses' cunning. Pervading all this — pervading the inner thought

of the poem — is an innate feeling of helplessness, giving vent to the frequent outburst of natural, unaffected piety, in which the stoutest heart confesses dependence on the heavenly powers, and calls on their assistance to shield him or to guide his shaft. The truth constantly recurring in every variety of note at the blind bard's command, is that all men have need of — yearn after — the assistance of Heaven —

"πάντες δὲ θεῶν χατέουσι ἀνθρωποι."

It is a great mistake to consider such interventions of the deities mere "poetical machinery," as though they were scaffoldings — simply aids to construct the poem — and not, as they really are, an essential part of its existence, the principle of its vitality. The sylphs and gnomes in Pope, and the enchantments in Tasso, may bear such an explanation — may be regarded as mere accidentals, not at all affecting the main expression of their poems — but the heroes of Homer are as earnest in their devotions to their titular gods as is the Christian to his patron saint.

In Dante, mingled with an ardent love for his country and a strong faith in the tenets of his religion, is a third element which absorbs these two; it is an insatiable thirst for knowledge — an ardent passion for philosophy, which he personifies in his Beatrice — and from the union of all three has sprung the *Divina Commedia*. Now, the lesson he constantly repeats is his inability to know things of himself, and the dependence of all knowledge on the divine idea:

"Ciò che non muore e ciò che può morire
Non è se non splendor di quella idea
Che partorisce, amando, il nostro Sire." [1]

In Shakspeare there is plainly asserted, in the grand array of passion personified in his master-pieces, an overwhelming feeling of retributive justice and of an all-ruling Providence, which is imparted rather by insinuation than by any direct assertion; and that feeling he himself has summed up in his own masterly words:

"There is a Divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough hew them how we will."

Thus it is we find all thought, all genuine literature, as well as the universe itself, mirroring forth the Divinity. All point to one creative source; *all speak one Word;* all . . . . But why say more? There is but *one Word.*

[1] "—— That which dies not,
And that which can die, are but each the beam
Of that idea, which our Sovereign Sire
Engendereth loving." — CAREY.

PART III.

PRACTICE.

CHAPTER I.

THE LITERARY ARTIST.

EVERY age is characterized by some intellectual trait. It has been already perceived that the prevailing tone of ours is scientific. Progress in industry and the mechanical arts is more highly prized than purely literary ability. Not but that there is much still written which is labelled literature. But few, very few indeed, of the many thousand volumes that are yearly flooding the reading world bear the impress that ranks them among the enduring monuments of intellect; very few deserve the title of classics; the greater number are explosive bubbles on the stream of thought. They are so, not through any lack of talent, but rather through its misapplication. The reason of this is to be found in the spirit of trifling that possesses the age. Time is wasted and energies are expended in the endeavor to move over a large surface of attainments; and as slight account is made of profoundness of knowledge, the results are not at all in keeping with the motive-power applied.

Men are too Pilate-like; they ask what the truth is and wait not for an answer; or, with Tennyson, they postpone it to the other life;

> "What hope of answer or redress?
> *Behind the veil, behind the veil.*"

They forget that investigation is a law of our intellects,[1] and that the truth can be found by every earnest searcher before he passes "behind the veil." There is not enough of the steadiness of purpose, profound thought, and diligent preparation that are necessary to achieve permanent success. Writers aim too low; they no longer seek the sublime and beautiful; they are content with the pretty and the startling; they have found the labor of art-study too irksome, and have thrown off its invigorating discipline as a cramping yoke; in a word, they have ceased to be literary artists. For in the marshalling of words and the evolution of ideas, the greatest effect is sought to be produced, and therefore artistic skill is required for the arrangement best calculated to give the desired result, and must be inborn, as in the man of genius, or acquired, as by the man of talent. Glance over one of the Shakspearian masterpieces. In that apparent abandonment to the inspiration of the moment, by which from his magic pen

[1] "Next, I consider that, in the case of educated minds, investigations into the argumentative proof of the things to which they have given their assent is an obligation, or rather a necessity. Such a trial of their intellects is a law of their nature, like the growth of childhood into manhood, and analogous to the moral ordeal which is the instrument of their spiritual life."—JOHN HENRY NEWMAN, *Grammar of Assent*, p. 182.

drop some of the loveliest flowers of poesy and the sweetest words in language, which reveal new worlds of thought and sentiment — in that total absorption in the spirit of his piece to the seeming neglect of the diction he employs, so that what is apparently a random expression turns out to be most essential; in that entire subserviency of all the parts to the end proposed; in all these traits of that grand whole producing the desired effect upon the reader, playing upon the multitudinous chords of his heart, and calling forth at will notes of pleasure and pain, we have unmistakable evidence of the perfect artist, who possesses the secret of hiding his artistic efforts. And so, on a like examination of one of Pope's pieces, in the rounded finish of every expression, in the exquisiteness with which a figure is set, and the apparent solicitude lest any word should be misplaced, we find palpable evidence of effort to have everything tend in the best manner possible to produce a desired effect; the piece wears on its face traces of art. So it is with the labored finish of Sallust; with the exquisite expression of Fenelon; with the Attic grace of Xenophon; with the sublime eloquence of Bossuet. All point to study, thought, labor, art. For the literary man is it true, as for the mechanic, that he must earn his bread in the sweat of his brow.

And genius is no exception to the rule. Carlyle defines it "a capacity for work." Michael Angelo calls it "eternal patience." Augustus Schlegel says that though it is "in a certain sense infallible, and has nothing to learn, still art is to be learned, and must be acquired by practice." Therefore, genius is

not indolence, nor eccentricity, nor a license to dispense with all labor. True, it is a gift from heaven, and like all heavenly gifts, generally placed in a frail vessel thrown among us at random; but invariably for a purpose and in obedience to a law.

We have already defined the characteristic of genius to be a power of simplifying, of taking that view of a subject in its rounded completeness that makes it more easily understood, of possessing one idea, in the light of which all others are resolvable. Hence a universal genius is never spoken of except by exaggeration. Genius in one department of knowledge excludes genius in another. Thus we have the mathematical genius, the military genius, the philosophic genius; but we never mention a genius in all or any two of these branches together. "But," it may be urged, "the possession of only one idea implies intellectual weakness; the man with many ideas has the superior intelligence." It is the opposite. Contemplate the Supreme Intelligence for a moment. It sees everything; It possesses all knowledge in the light of an idea, which is Its own essence. Everything is contained in that idea, that divine essence; and the more perfect created intelligences are, the more they resemble their Creator, the less is the number of their ideas, and the more they see in the light of these ideas.[1] Superior intelligence belongs not to a caviller, a disputatious person, a hair-splitter; these classes

[1] "Unde oportet, quod ea quæ Deus cognoscit per unam, inferiores intellectus cognoscant per multa; et tanto amplius per plura, quanto amplius intellectus inferior fuit." — *Summa*, Pars Prima, Quæst. 55, Art. 3.

give indications of narrow-mindedness and weakness of understanding. We make use of argument to supply our deficiency of comprehension. We are discussing some property or relation of a triangle; we are puzzled over it; we can proceed no further. A mathematical genius comes along; he draws a line or two, and resolves the figure into its simplest elements; in a few words, he throws a flood of light upon the subject-matter, so that we are surprised at our own lack of comprehension, and we exclaim: "How simple! Why did we not see it before?" Again, we are perplexed over a proposition in some old author; we see not its bearings; we throw it aside as a dry and barren idea, and we wonder why any man in his sound senses can sit down and seriously write such language. A genius takes up that idea; he makes it the nucleus of an essay or treatise, in which he traces its relations through all departments of thought; in his hands it becomes the central point whence emanates an illumination that reveals the secret of a thousand things hitherto incomprehensible. What was barrenness before, becomes the germ of a whole world of thought. It is ever thus with genius. We all of us bask in its sunshine. Its slightest conjectures become established truths for us. Its proved ideas we take as our first principles. Its views we make the standard of our own. It discovers and invents, and we apply. We add the weight of its assertions to support the deficiencies of our own weak arguments. "The master says so," is often enough our saving clause and our most convincing proof. Reason is infallible under given circumstances; but the instinct of faith is always

strong within us. It is the secret of our progress; for were we obliged to refer all truth back to first principles, taking nothing for granted but the self-evident, the march of ideas would be slow; we would be always beginning, always making the same discoveries, and much that is now the glory of intelligence would be still buried in the unknown.

It is the privilege of the genius to perceive a new idea dawn upon his age before the common mass of thinkers. His superior intellectual position "widens the horizon of his ignorance," and he feels a want the sooner. Hence the fact of such frequent occurrence of two or more making the same discovery about the same time. Their attention is drawn by the exigencies of the case in the same direction, and even before they know definitely what it is they are going to discover — before the want arising assumes a definite shape, they feel it steal upon them, so to speak; and often, groping their way in the dark, they hit upon it accidentally, not recognizing its value for future times. Scheele and Priestly discover oxygen in the same year; Newton and Leibnitz discover the calculus independently of each other. About the same time, Leverrier and Adams compute the elements of the planet Neptune, the discovery of which Airy considers "the effect of a movement of the age;" and in 1868, Lockyer in England, and Janssen in Hindostan, under circumstances entirely different, conclude that by means of the spectroscope they can, on any clear day, study the solar prominences, visible to the naked eye only during total eclipses. Such are a few of many instances to show one phase of intelligence working.

Writers on genius have much to say about originality. It consists not so much in saying something that nobody ever before said, as in moulding an idea into shape, and giving it a hue that stamps it as characteristic. "The bard of Eden," says Chateaubriand, speaking of Milton, "after the example of Virgil, has acquired originality in appropriating to himself the riches of others, which proves that the original style is not the style which never borrows of any one, but that which no other person is capable of reproducing." The great genius is not over-particular about the materials he uses. He picks up those nearest to hand; he stamps them with the impress of his genius; and so fashioned, they ever after pass as his, and his alone. The conception of no one of Shakspeare's plays is his. It lived in history and tradition long before he made it the heirloom of humanity. The history of *Athalie* was read in Scripture ages before it became, under the hand of Racine, the flower of French letters. The appearance of an idea in two or more authors proves nothing beyond mere coincidence. Two minds may arrive at the same result by entirely different methods of thought. Truth is one, as the Author of truth is one; and only small fragments of it are realized by the most powerful minds. The rill, feebly following the ravine's course, the torrent dashing down the mountain's side, and the expansive river majestically winding along the plain, bearing on its bosom a nation's treasures — each and all, however distant be their sources, originally came from the same ocean to which they return, and in comparison with which the greatest of them is insig-

nificant. So all truth, all beauty, all excellence, have their creative source in God, the divine Fountain-Head, in whom they will again find a resting-place and a home. What wonder, then, that as the same shower replenishes many springs, the same truth should sink into more intellects than one, and flow therefrom tinged by their individual peculiarities.

The source from which the literary artist draws materials to work upon, is as varied and universal as nature. The intellectual, the moral, and the physical worlds are alike open to his observation and study. Life, savage and civilized; the past and the present; the empirical and the ideal; beauty and deformity; virtue and vice; nobility and baseness; pleasure and pain, all present themselves to him; from all he must cull, and from the clashing of opposites, and the harmony of compatibles, and the influencing agencies in the physical and spiritual orders, weave an artistic whole that is so connected in parts, and so much the expression of an inspiring principle, that it becomes a thing of undying fame for all time. His aim — the aim of all literature, is to solve life's problem. No easy one it is, considering man's numerous and complex relations with his fellow-man, himself and his Creator; the thousand passions that alternately roll over his soul, and lash it into so many moods; the contradictory influences under which he moves, and the rigid logic with which every event works out its result, either here or hereafter.

The production of a literary artist is the image of himself, inasmuch as it possesses a soul and a body. In nature, it is not the body that shapes the soul; it

is rather the soul that gives form and activity to the body. We lay stress on the same distinction in the work of art. When Cousin tells us that "method is the genius of a system," [1] he makes method usurp the place of principle. The principle is the soul of the system, and therefore its genius. It determines both system and method. We made this distinction at the outset; we again call attention to it here, as the opposite doctrine has respectable names on its side. It has been seen that there is no artistic master-piece without expression; there is no expression without unity; and there is no unity without a common bond, in which all the parts unite, and therefore without an animating principle to keep them together. In the construction of a work, then, the first thing the literary artist must do is to determine the principle that gives it unity, and therefore life. He must observe, study, meditate. His subject-matter, when well digested, will determine his method of treatment. And if he has no subject, no aim, no idea to develop, no proposition to prove —

"S'il ne sent point du ciel l'influence secrète,"—

if all is random and confusion, he had better wait. It is a loss of time to undertake that which pride, rather than ability, dictates. "Life is short, art long, occasion passing, experiment dangerous, judgment difficult." [2] There is a work for every man; each has his function in life. *Atqui licet esse beatis.* Let not him

[1] *History of Philosophy*, Vol. I., p. 320.

[2] Vita brevis, ars vero longa, occasio autem præceps, experimentum pereculosum, judicium difficile." — HIPPOCRATES, Aph. i. 1.

destined for hand-work assume to do the labor that belongs to him selected for brain-work. Let each hold to that for which he has natural aptitude; in that alone lies the secret of his success.

Thought, sentiment, enthusiasm, unite in giving soul to a work. A great source of labor is the mechanism of construction of the body. Language is the material upon which the literary artist works. He must aim at the accurate wording of his propositions. He must therefore seek to be complete master of his language. He must know the force and bearing of every word. He must study the great masters. We cannot judge of a musical instrument by the grating notes which a beginner draws therefrom; it is only when the consummate master elicits sweet and rapturous variations that we appreciate its power. The tyro in literary art should learn from those who have made it the vehicle of profound ideas and happy expressions the power there is in it, its richness of idiom, the flexibility with which it bends to the humor of the author — now plain and simple, now full-flowing and pathetic, again vigorous and energetic, in all cases variety of style yielding to variety of thought. But nothing can take the place of constant practice. It is only that beating and hammering on language — that turning it into a thousand moulds — that correcting and refining of its diction, that can make it bend to every grade of thought, and express every shade of meaning.

Above all, the literary artist should guard truth as a sacred trust, and never sacrifice any jot thereof to a smooth turn or a rhetorical figure. There is no beauty

without truth. Real art grows sickly, rank, defective in the unwholesome atmosphere of falsehood. Let the artist be so possessed with his subject-matter that he will see in it "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth," and he will find fit expression for his views.

> "Prune thou thy words, the thoughts control,
> That o'er thee swell and throng;
> They will condense within thy soul,
> And change to purpose strong."[1]

CHAPTER II.

LITERARY MORALITY.

MAN has more than art-power and intelligence; he has soul, and that soul is the seat of a multitude of contradictory passions. As such it is called the heart. In literature, the whole man speaks; therefore the heart has a say in the production of thought, and in sensitive natures determines motives, and gives a coloring to the labor of their life. Genius is generally accompanied with refined sensibility, and is therefore influenced in a special manner by the heart. Is the author who is ruled by his sensibility crossed in life? All his darker passions are aroused; he grows embittered against society; humanity is a monster; the Divinity even is the impersonation of cruelty and

[1] J. H. Newman, *Verses on Various Occasions.*

injustice. He recoils from friends; he recoils from himself. He lives a misanthrope. The hiss of black hatred resounds through his works. Is he happy in his career, surrounded by endearing friends, who wield a wholesome influence over him? His writings everywhere reflect the sunshine in which he basks. Nature is all beauty; society a joy; life a pleasant dream, and God good. Thus are impressions ideas to him; and it not unfrequently happens that what, in his seeming, is the logical deduction of a severe course of reasoning — a purely intellectual process — is but the silent work of an undercurrent of sentiments welling up from the inner recesses of his heart. And so sentiments influence thought, expand the intelligence, raise man above himself, and inspire some of the sublimest passages in literature. Where an author throws his whole soul into a subject, he is most forcible. The most soul-stirring passages in literature are the result of a play of feeling, a personal reminiscence, an overflow of sensibility. There is in the reading of such passages the electric influence of soul upon soul, the source of sympathy between author and reader.

As literature proceeds from the whole man, so it addresses itself to the whole man. There is in it truth for the mind, beauty for the æsthetic sense; and there is also in it that which appeals to the heart. When the genius rises above the crampings of systems, and personal likings and dislikings; when he soars clear of all prejudice and the turmoil of passion, and seems to catch a glimpse of the real relations of things, and a stray beam of the created light of truth,

such as primeval man lived in prior to the fall, lights up his soul, he is invariably in harmony with the good, the true, and the beautiful. But man is fallen man, and his moral nature is sadly impaired. Human nature is corrupt human nature. Passion is active. It blinds; it leads reason captive. It never dies; it only sleeps, and is easily aroused; and when aroused, it is in continual struggle against man's better judgment. It behooves the writer, then, to be calm and collected, to know fully what he is about, and to say to himself, "Are the consequences of this work to be for good or for evil? Is there anything here that I would regret in after-life—anything that I would wish recalled on my death-bed?" And at every sacrifice he should prune whatever in the remotest degree would be the germ of ruin to a soul. Having satisfied himself on this negative test, he should further say to himself, "As a work of literature, this book is addressed to fallen human nature; and fallen human nature ever tends to fall lower in the moral scale; but it should be the aim of every book to raise up that nature, to draw out its nobler and better parts. Is this the function of the book I now write? Will it make man look more kindly on his fellow-man? Will it help him to think on his Creator the more, and draw him closer to Him? Will he be a better man for the reading of it?" And if the writer can answer these questions with satisfaction, may God bless him; he is a benefactor to humanity; he is deserving of laurels; his book through all time will be doing good; and in eternity alone will he be able to reap the reward it has sown for him. It is within the

power of every literary artist to thus control himself, and express the true and the good in spite of his individual feelings. The higher genius always makes his prejudices subservient to his art when he cannot keep them altogether out of sight. It is littleness that bustles and cries out, and makes a great noise about grievances, exaggerated and imaginary.

In literature, then, it is of extreme importance to draw a line of distinction between the moral and the immoral. As in nature there are flowers and fruits fair to the eye but rotten at the core, so in the garden of humanity are there to be found, under an accomplished exterior, a bad heart and a vicious character, such as might be the product of a cultivation based on Chesterfield's *Letters*—that elegant code of polite scoundrelism—such as led Shakspeare to say:

> "That one may smile, and smile, and be a villain;"

so, also, in the domain of literature, there often lurk behind the garb of an elegant diction ideas and sentiments the most contaminating. The great and infallible criterion whereby to distinguish, is the divine and immutable law of morality, such as is the rule of man's actions, and as he will be judged by — the Decalogue. A literary production should never attempt this law by directly teaching doctrines, insinuating a spirit, or acting upon and drawing out feelings to which it is opposed. The very instinct of literary art looks to this criterion; for in the departments requiring most artistic skill, viz., poetry and fiction, the basis of nearly all, and of all the most excellent and successful efforts, is also the basis of the moral

code. A thread of love is woven into their groundwork. But that thread is frequently so tattered and soiled with human passion, its divine origin is no longer recognizable. Yet love is the golden chain that binds humanity in a bond of brotherhood, that keeps society together, that connects earth with heaven. It is the law not only of man, but of God. It is the principle of His triune personality. Without it, nature would drop back to its original nothingness, and its Creator would cease to be; for God is Love.

Writers of poetry and fiction seem to forget this elevated character of love, and give the sacred name to blind passion. They spin a thread of fate from the fiction of their brain, and weave it about their characters, and call it destiny or elective affinity, as though every individual were not responsible and the master of his own choosing; and thus they sow broadcast the seeds of free-loveism, again abusing the sacred name. They deck up monsters of vice in all the fascinations of youth, beauty, engaging manners, and splendid fortune; they

> "—— make madness beautiful, and cast
> O'er erring deeds and thoughts a heavenly hue of words,"

and represent such creations wading through crime to the enjoyment of earthly happiness, and call on the reader to sympathize with them in adventures and sufferings brought upon them by their own vicious ways. The reader does so; and from sympathy he passes to liking, and from liking is soon involved in like deeds. Say he does not fall so low;

still the reading of such works blunts his finer feelings, prepares him to consider unmoved, perhaps even complacently, crimes the bare mention of which should have been a horror to him, and thus suppresses the growth of his better nature. It especially destroys genuine sentiment.

There is too much of the lackadaisical in our modern literature. Life is reduced to a sentiment; thought is a sentiment; love is a sentiment; religion is a sentiment; and often God is regarded as an object of pious sentiment. This is sentimentalism. The offspring of exaggerated and unnatural feelings, it fosters them in the reader of delicate sensibility to the ruin of all human impulses. He becomes unreal. His heart grows hardened. It may seem paradoxical, but it is true that sentimentalism hardens the heart. It is but a passing thing; it evaporates soon, and seems, so to speak, to leave after it a sedimentary deposit which shrouds the better feelings. See that young lady transported to ecstasy over some meaningless expression, and paying the tribute of a tear to some high-wrought, fanciful, and improbable incident, picturing affliction and misery where they never could have existed. She is distracted by the untimely intrusion of some poor, infirm, suffering, needy one, a true object of pity and charity. He asks an alms. In that half-scowling, perturbed look with which she gives the scanty mite or the curt refusal, we perceive no indications of a heart softened on beholding a brother in actual distress; the unholy tears she had been previously shedding seem to have extinguished in her the last spark of real sentiment, and encased

her heart in selfishness. This is a scene of daily occurrence. Man is but too prone to be unreal, and to deceive himself on his nearest and highest interests; the grand aim of literature ought to be not to hide these interests from his view, and sink him deeper in delusion, but to place them before him, and inspire him with practical and ennobling sentiments regarding them.

"It is unlawful to influence when it is not permitted to convince; where conviction is a deception, persuasion is a perfidy."[1] An incontrovertible truth, rendered doubly strong when we consider the usual attitude of readers towards an author. They are frequently credulous and unthinking; and some read to beguile an idle hour, or even to be lulled to sleep; some crave light reading, and abandon themselves to the scenes, incidents, and impressions of the novel or poem with the repose of one listlessly gliding down a smooth stream, calmly enjoying the varied beauties that present themselves on its banks; some few read to gain a further insight into the workings of the mind and heart than can be learned within the narrow circle of their own experience; but they are far between who vex and weary their minds in separating the salutary from the baneful. He, then, who would avail himself of the confidence placed in him by the large majority of his readers, to insinuate aught in his work that tends to inflame the passions, who would diffuse a misanthropic spirit through its pages,

[1] No es licito persuadir quando no es licito convencer; quando la conviccion es un engaño, la persuasion es una perfidia.— BALMES, *El Criterio*, p. 200.

who would elicit sympathy in an unhallowed cause, or tamper with the truth, or gild false maxims, is guilty of a breach of good faith towards his readers; he becomes a public evil; he is, indeed, a seducer of men and an agent of hell.

The reader has a duty to perform here. He should be select in his reading. He should neither patronize nor encourage a bad book. Supply is always in proportion to demand. Let the bad book drop. Cease lauding it as a matchless literary production. Show it up in its true light. Show it to be false in sentiment, false in fact, false in principle, and it will soon pass into oblivion.

The critic's is a noble position; it is also a responsible one. He ought to be the faithful sentinel and servant of humanity, ever on the lookout, ever quick to report the signs of the times and the spirit that actuates a work, fearless in exposing shams, just in his estimates, and at all times truthful. But truth compels us to say that the press weakens its own power by its negligent criticisms, by the subserviency with which it does party work, and by making use of false standards in judging of a literary production. There are honorable exceptions. The critical opinion of a book is not always the just estimate of its value. The professional critic is usually a man overpowered with work, and, when he is best disposed, he seldom has time to read a book to the end; he has to be content with dipping into it and recording his impression as favorable or unfavorable. He may have found the drift of the work good, and it really may be so; but there may also lurk in an uncut page poison intellec-

tual or moral whereof he knows nothing. Hence all criticism is based on probability, more or less reliable, according to the known judgments of the critic in other cases. That criticism is the most probably correct which agrees in the main with others from different quarters, representing opposite or divergent interests. Criticism, like medicine, is a matter of empiricism. There is nothing infallible in its judgments. There are no standards, except of a vague nature, by which all can be ruled; and even were there, each critic would apply them differently, according to the cultivation of reason and taste. We say reason and taste, for a literary work is not judged by reason alone. A scientific work is either true or false, and its value is determined accordingly. Not so a piece of literary art. There, it not unfrequently happens that where the reason condemns, the æsthetic sense approves. The language of soul, heart, sentiment, is not the language of intelligence. The feelings may speak one thing, the judgment another. St. Augustine, in his younger days, shed tears over the love of Dido. His maturer judgment condemns his folly; for it finds that love opposed to morality, and he again weeps over the tears he formerly shed. And so, throughout literature, in the greatest master-pieces, there are passages based upon deeds our judgments condemn, and we shrink from with horror; and yet we learn them by heart; we are enthusiastic in their praise; we recite them to our friends. They please our æsthetic sense; they move our sentiments. We see perfection approached in their artistic execution. And this suggests a question delicate as it is important: What

works may or may not be safely read in literature? We lay down but a general rule:

I. Every literary production that promotes, encourages, and strengthens truth and virtue, may be read with profit to soul and intellect.

II. Every literary production not opposed, in its spirit and bearing, to truth and virtue, and implying the necessity of both one and the other, may be read with safety.

III. Every literary production, be its artistic qualities what they may, that scoffs at religion, disregards truth, looks upon morality as a prejudice into which men have been educated; that speaks lightly of any of these; that throws any, the least, aspersion upon them; that even, in a negative manner, by losing sight of them, and treating subjects as though these eternal principles were not, thus insinuates that life is good without them — every such production is to be condemned, and its reading discouraged.

It will not do to quote the maxim: "To the pure all things are pure." It is a sophism. Virtue can never regard vice as a virtue, and it may or may not be contaminated by coming in contact therewith. There is another maxim much more to the point. It is, that evil communications corrupt good morals. Individual experience is of no avail here. True, one man may have read a bad book without its injuring his moral character in the least; but how knows he that his neighbor, to whom he recommends the same work, has the strength of character to withstand its poisoning influence?

In all departments of thought there is a pure and invigorating literature. There is also a literature of doubtful morality. Finally, there is literature positively immoral. Nor is it to be wondered at. Being the embodiment in language of what there is most intimate in man — part of himself — and often the production of a misinformed mind and an erring heart, it is to be expected that a large ingredient of untruth and immorality run through it. From the imperfect, the weak, and the erring, we cannot hope for the perfect, the strong, and the infallible.

CHAPTER III.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION.

LITERATURE is the expression of man's affections as influenced by society, the material world, and his Creator. It expresses individual feelings, as in the lyric; national feelings, as in the epic; and appeals to our common humanity, as in the drama.

2. Its fundamental principle is that a common humanity underlies our individual personalities.

3. Its legitimate function is to interpret the fainter emotions of our nature.

4. Its origin dates from the fall, and man's consequent degeneracy.

5. Climate influences language, and language reacts in the moulding of thought. There are "plastic moments" of language, when it throws off the chrysalis of an old speech and puts on the garb of a new one, and at such moments appear geniuses who give it a significance it retains afterwards. Such geniuses are Homer, Dante, the author of the Nibelungenlied, and Shakspeare.

6. The architecture of a people, as a rule, is inspired by a spirit akin to that which inspires its literature. It is therefore an excellent counter-check in determining the predominant spirit of a people or an age, and should not be overlooked in criticism. He has but a partial acquaintance with Mediæval Europe who shuts his eyes upon the Gothic cathedrals.

7. There are epochs when the expression of a people is mature, rounded, fully developed. Society has an external polish. Language reflects the refinement which society affects. It also is polished, and becomes the standard for after-times. Such epochs develop the drama. Given a people with an initial literature, engaged in a long period of struggle, and triumphantly issuing from that struggle, a golden era of literature may be predicted for such a people immediately after the first flush of victory. A Pericles will beautify his Athens. An Augustus will find his Rome of brick, and will leave it of marble. And then can we look for the decline of that nation; for with refinement in manners, in letters, in art and architecture, there invariably appears corruption. Labor is the law of life. When men cease to fulfil that law — when, instead, they abandon themselves to a life of ease and indolence,

they already begin to hatch the germs of degeneracy. Such is the lesson to be learned from the law of literary epochs.

8. Literature is the varied expression of thought, laboring under different influences. Religion and philosophy are among the most potential. They shape the same thought in many ways. They underlie the whole history of literature.

9. The sum of thought is a constant quantity. Time may develop and apply in different directions the same thought, so that it appears a new idea. Strip it of its accidentals of time and place, and it will be seen to be an old acquaintance. And this suggests a good rule in reading. Deduct all the negations, all the side views, all the merely illustrative matter, all the digressions of a book, and it will be found that the absolutely positive in it — the main idea — can be condensed in the space of a paragraph.

10. The spirit of rationalism, fostered by the Renaissance, and fanned into a great religious flame by Martin Luther, is, in its nature, tendency, and results, destructive of all thought, inasmuch as it doubts, denies, and grows inconsistent, without adding or developing any positive idea, and thus begets illogical habits of mind. The instinct of faith is necessary for man. Those loudest in its abuse are in a thousand ways its creatures. All great intellectual discoveries and achievements are based on this instinct.

11. The spirit of rationalism undid the work of centuries by widening the breach between the secular and religious elements of society. To reconcile these two elements is the great problem of modern thinkers,

and the most earnest efforts to solve it seem to have no other effect than to widen the breach. Witness the theories of Positivism, Evolutionism, and Hegelism. The great social characteristic of ancient times was, that the religious and secular elements were harmoniously blended. This harmony is reflected in their literature. Its absence is felt in ours. A completely developed modern literature will only result from this harmonious development.

12. Modern subjectivism is a literary disease. It arises from the spirit of rationalism. In breaking from the moorings of the past, men found in themselves only self for a criterion; they adopted it, and made it enter into all their views.

13. We must go beyond self for the source of truth, which is also the source of beauty. In God is found both. But, beginning with the denial of revelation, men have ended with the denial of God. Hence there is no science in modern times beyond the science of the material. The science of beauty is not explicable in the light of materialistic principles. The beautiful is the expression of the ideal — the created ideal placed in man by the creative act, and recognized more or less clearly when the sense of the beautiful is awakened in the soul.

14. Literature is classical in proportion as it expresses the beautiful. Eliminate that, no matter how broken its reflection may be, and there is destroyed the conservative element that constitutes the essence of a classic.

15. Literature requires art. Art in its highest expression is the product of genius. Genius is talent

intensified. As art is imitative of the creative act of God, and as whatever God creates is symbolical of Him, inasmuch as it symbolizes some one or other of His attributes, so the product of art is expressive of the ideal in the artist's mind, and the more faithful the expression is, the more the creative intellect resembles the divine Mind; and as that Mind has but one idea — His own essence — if that may be called an idea which is essentially subject and object — Himself — so the more elevated the intelligence is, the less is the number of ideas in which it comprehends all things.

16. As literature reflects the divinity in its most essential characteristics, the higher, the holier, the more ennobling it is, the more clearly it reflects these characteristics. It fulfils its true mission, then, according as it ennobles man's nature, and makes it like to Him who said: "Be ye holy, for I, the Lord your God, am holy;" and it is ennobling to man's nature in proportion as it is in strict accordance with the immutable laws of morality. The morality of life is not one thing, and the morality of art another. They are both one. This is a canon of criticism the critic should hold to under all circumstances.

Conclusion.

In reading the history of a particular country, the student sees a people rise from comparative barbarism to civilization; he is very apt to generalize the fact, and say that such has been the order of things from the beginning; and he has but one more step to take

in asserting that man is a development of the lower order of life. Rousseau prepared the way for Darwin and Herbert Spencer. But when all literature is taken into account; when we see nation instruct nation; when we realize the fact that society is a creature of education, that men may invent a new mechanical power, but that they cannot create an idea; we are led to seek a beginning for this infusion of knowledge, and we find it when God created everything good and perfect in its kind, and gave man dominion over the earth and all it contains;[1] when He brought "all the beasts of the earth and all the fowls of the air . . . . to Adam to see what he would call them;"[2] when, to use the beautiful words of a voice that is stilled for time, "He plants an Eden for His new-made creatures, and there comes to them Himself; and the evenings of the young world are consecrated by familiar colloquies between the creatures and their Creator."[3] When God walked with Adam "in Paradise at the afternoon air,"[4] what profound secrets His presence must have revealed to this child of earth! What grand thoughts He must have suggested! What mysteries unravelled! What revelations made known! The knowledge that men boast of to-day, in their "darkness of understanding," is, in its totality, but a broken fragment of that grand whole possessed by the primeval man.

[1] *Genesis* i. 26. [2] Ibid., ii. 19.
[3] Father Faber, *The Creator and the Creature*, p. 132.
[4] *Genesis* iii. 8.

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THE END.